



REMARKS
ON THE
EARL OF SELKIRK'S
OBSERVATIONS
ON THE
PRESENT STATE
OF THE
HIGHLANDS OF SCOTLAND,
WITH A VIEW OF THE
CAUSES AND PROBABLE CONSEQUENCES
OF
EMIGRATION.

(By the Author)



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INTRODUCTION.

FEW subjects seem more to have occupied the public attention than the important political speculations contained in the ‘ Observations on the Present State of the Highlands of Scotland.’ In itself at all times of deep moment, it is at present more peculiarly interesting, from certain temporary considerations arising out of the political aspect of the times ; when our national rival is making such gigantic strides to universal dominion, and when we are now called upon

to exert all the energies of the British empire in our defence. At such an era, when ingenuity seems to exhaust herself in devising means for raising men adequate to the demands of these perilous times, the inquiry may well arrest attention, how far it is expedient or wise that any person, capable of adding to our national strength, should be encouraged to abandon his native country.

THE mode in which this subject has been discussed by Lord Selkirk renders it still more attractive and inviting. We are not presented with a dull and tiresome calculation in political arithmetic, to enable us to estimate the profit or loss resulting from Highland emigration. The charms of language with which his opinions are adorned; the enthusiasm which they breathe, and the beneficence from which they seem to spring; the indisputable truths upon which his great and leading doctrines are founded; the tone of authority in which the conclusions he has drawn are delivered, not as the opinions and theories of others, but as the result of actual observa-

tion, throw a kind of fascination over the reader, which prevents him from doubting the solidity of the political consequences deduced. If any thing were wanting completely to delude the judgment of the public, it would be found in the air of romance, which the narrative of the establishment of the colony on Prince Edward's island gives to the whole. There is something extremely inviting in the review of an Arcadian state of society : and how amiable does the design appear of withdrawing the poor and the humble from the miseries incident to their situation, amidst the cold selfishness of an advanced period of society ; and transplanting them to a new country where the same odious distinctions do not meet them, but where they will all find themselves equal, in being dependent only on nature and their own exertions for their support and enjoyment. It seems, too, to afford such a proof of the deep conviction which the author has of the justice of the views he has formed, and it has led to such a course of laborious and unwearied exertion,

without any other apparent motive than that of pure patriotism and disinterested benevolence, that it is almost impossible for the most determined scepticism to refuse assent to the opinions which have dictated such a conduct. It is the more remarkable, and therefore the more seducing, when it has originated in a person of an elevated rank of life and ample fortune : circumstances at all times apt to influence our judgment.

THE numerous and frequent emigrations, which have for many years taken place from the Highlands of Scotland, did not long escape notice. The people, thus expatriated, were of a race of men peculiarly attached to their ancient customs and their native soil ; the characteristic of all rude tribes in a mountainous, inaccessible, and highly picturesque country. The fate of these exiles excited in the public mind in general deep commiseration, mixed with other sentiments called forth by the apparent oppression exercised by the Highland proprietors, which occasioned so much individual suffering. Others who

viewed the subject more nearly, and not through the medium of prejudice, while they could not stifle in their breasts the feelings of regret, so natural for the melancholy situation of the emigrants, often brought upon themselves by their ignorance and restless pursuit of happiness at a distance, entertained a doubt how far the charge of oppression and cruelty against the proprietors was in all cases well-founded. They saw that emigration had often commenced, not in necessity or covetousness on the part of the landlords; but because, in the progress of improvement, it was proposed that the tenants should pay a rent more adequate to the state of the country than they had paid for centuries before, when the produce of the ground was neither so great nor so valuable. They saw that the discontent thus excited among the ignorant was fostered by selfish and interested men; one set of whom thought that such persons continuing in this country stood in the way of their own ambitious views; while another set, who had obtained grants of land in America, knew

that without emigration these would be perfectly useless to them.

BUT, of all the theorists in this age of novelty and paradox, none arose so hardy as to maintain, that the great and increasing emigration from the Highlands was advantageous to this empire; that no room for the industry of those who proposed to emigrate could be found within the country; that if they remained, they must be unemployed, and consequently a burden; and that, therefore, the sooner they carried their industry and their skill to another country, so much the better. This, however, Lord Selkirk has supplied; for all this he maintains. He is at the same time fully aware of the singularity of his opinions; and he seems to claim no small share of merit from this very circumstance. He bespeaks the attention and favour of his reader, by boldly declaring, in the first words which he addresses to the public, that, ‘on a subject which had undergone much investigation, and excited general attention, he comes forward to controvert received opi-

‘ nions, and to offer views which have previously passed unnoticed.’

SINGULARITY of opinion, however, is nowhere declared to be the test of truth. The annunciation is, of course, intended to provoke discussion ; and Lord Selkirk will probably have no dislike to have an opportunity of canvassing and confirming his opinions, if he should honour these remarks with a perusal. In them it is hoped he will find nothing inconsistent with the legitimate rules of fair and impartial inquiry ; and the same freedom which he claims in commenting upon the opinions or conduct of others, he will not of course object to, when applied to his own.

A question is anticipated, which at once occurs after the bold declaration of his being to produce novel opinions upon a subject which has been often canvassed, and which embraces the political happiness of a large portion of the inhabitants of this country. ‘ Every one is disposed to ask, What have been the peculiar opportunities of information upon which he presumes to


‘ contradict those who have gone before him?’
 The following is the answer, which the author gives to this very natural question. It shows the foundation of the right by which he claims the prerogative of dictating on this subject; and it at the same time contains what he exhibits as an accurate picture of the progress of those views which led to all his subsequent exertions.

‘ WITHOUT any immediate or local connection with the Highlands, I was led early in life to take a warm interest in the fate of my countrymen in that part of the empire. During the course of my academical studies, my curiosity was strongly excited by the representations I had heard of the ancient state of society, and the striking peculiarity of manner still remaining among them; and in the year 1792, I was prompted to take an extensive tour through their wild region, and to explore many of its remotest and most secluded vallies. In the course of this, I ascertained some of the leading facts, on which the arguments of

the following pages are grounded: in particular, that emigration was an unavoidable result of the general state of the country, arising from causes above all controul, and, in itself, of essential consequence to the tranquillity and permanent welfare of the kingdom.

THE particular destination of the emigrants is not likely to excite much interest in those who believe that emigration may be obviated altogether. Being persuaded that no such expectation could be reasonably entertained, I bestowed some attention on details, which, to other observers, may have appeared nugatory. I learned that the Highlanders were dispersing to a variety of situations, in a foreign land, where they were lost not only to their native country, but to themselves as a separate people. Admiring many generous and manly features in their character, I could not observe, without regret, the rapid decline of their genuine manners, to which the circumstances of the country seemed

' inevitably to lead. I thought, however,
 ' that a portion of the ancient spirit might
 ' be preserved among the Highlanders of the
 ' New World : that the emigrants might be
 ' brought together in some part of our own
 ' colonies, where they would be of national
 ' utility, and where no motives of general
 ' policy would militate (as they certainly
 ' may at home) against the preservation of
 ' all those peculiarities of customs and lan-
 ' guage, which they are themselves so reluc-
 ' tant to give up, and which are perhaps in-
 ' timately connected with many of their most
 ' striking and characteristic virtues *.'

It cannot escape observation, that this ac-
 count betrays the source of many early prepos-
 sessions. Of these it is difficult indeed for any 
 mind to divest itself. That, in the course of a
 single visit to this country, a stranger to the
 language and the wants of its inhabitants, was
 not able to correct his preconceived opinions of

* P. 1—3.

what once was their situation, and what must now be their wishes, need not excite astonishment. It is a subject on which a warm fancy and romantic imagination could not fail to indulge with peculiar fondness. These are the faculties of the mind which, in youth, soonest reach maturity : But these are not the only faculties which are requisite for the inquiry how the condition of the lower ranks is to be ameliorated. The idea which was impressed so strongly upon Lord Selkirk's mind, amidst his early studies, was to preserve the ancient manners, and to give free scope to the ancient feelings of the Highlanders. These it had been the policy of government to efface as quickly and as radically as possible, and the success of these measures had produced many inconveniencies. In this country these views of the author's never could be carried into effect. But in the remote districts of America, could there be the same political obstacles to the scheme ? With such preconceived notions need we wonder, that what others have seen tending to the comfort and

usefulness of the people at home, he has failed to discover ; and that every method for improving the condition of the Highlanders, and obviating the distresses occasioned by the breaking up of the ancient system of manners, short of emigration, has been overlooked ; or that where it was impossible to overlook it, it has figured only in the diminished scale in which every object must appear which is hostile to the warm and romantic impressions of youth ? In short, Lord Selkirk has not been able to take a calm and dispassionate view of the subject. He has drawn, from the representations of former times, his opinions of the present character of the people ; whence he ascribes to them feelings and affections the result of his closet reflections, the fallacy of which his opportunities of information regarding the actual state of the country, and of its inhabitants, have not enabled him to detect.

THE important principles which are to guide our judgement upon this, as on every other subject of political economy, have been

illustrated by Dr Adam Smith, in his immortal Treatise on the Wealth of Nations. His usual acuteness is displayed in the 4th book, where the solid foundation of all our reasoning upon this subject is accurately laid down.

It is unfortunate that, upon the same incontrovertible and firmly established principles, Lord Selkirk rests his general reasonings; for, in their application, he has raised an edifice totally different from what that author intended. The singular plausibility and air of intelligence and candour, with which his conclusions are stated, mislead the reader, till he finds himself in the midst of a labyrinth of paradoxes and contradictions, from which he knows not how to escape, and cannot conceive how he wandered so far. While he thinks he has been only yielding his assent to the illustration, from the individual case of the Highlands, of those general laws by the operation of which Dr Smith has shewn, that a removal of a part of the tenantry is always

the forerunner of the improvement of the manufactures and commerce of the state, he finds he is assenting to a system of depopulation, inconsistent with the true interests of the commonwealth. The removal, which that enlightened author alludes to, means only the change of employment, not change of country. For it can form no part of a general system of improvement to diminish the cultivators of the soil, without increasing the industrious inhabitants of the towns.

To assist in endeavouring to detect the sophistry of some of the reasonings of Lord Selkirk, and to convert the truth of some of the facts from which his inferences are deduced, the following hints are offered. The sketch, it is hoped, will be filled up by some abler pen. The writer of these remarks cannot expect this endeavour to meet with the singular applause which has accompanied Lord Selkirk's speculations, or the marked approbation which his conduct has experienced. The very attempt to dissolve the magic spell, which Lord Selkirk has contrived to throw around him,

must, independently of any defect in the execution, be unpopular. All that is aimed at is a fair discussion of the question, which, on one side, has been argued with so much of the imposing enthusiasm of eloquence. In disapproving of much which is advanced, the author can assure the public that he has no personal object of any kind to serve: he has unfortunately no highland tenantry to lose in this country, and no means of employing them in another. What he conceives to be the best and most solid advantage which the empire at large will derive from Highland population, and the greatest sum of individual happiness which that population can attain, is the only incitement he has to discuss this question. Every patriotic and benevolent mind must feel an interest in such a question, when he thinks he sees mistaken opinions recommended by such high authority, and sanctioned by a conduct which only makes them the more pernicious.

I. THE Noble Author begins by directing the attention of his readers to the ancient state of the Highlands, during the independence of the chieftains, and marks the internal state of the country resulting from that circumstance. In a picture of the present state of a country, it seems singular to begin by describing what it formerly was, of which the author's readers have generally just the same means of information as the author himself. When both derive their knowledge from the same source, it seems unnecessary to dwell on details which all may acquire without his aid; and the reader impatiently turns to the page where the present not the past state of society and manners is to be sketched. No one in the slightest degree acquainted with the Highlands of Scotland, is ignorant of those leading facts which are detailed by Lord Selkirk at so much length. But the intention of again exhibiting a view of ancient manners, is for the purpose of

ingrafting his future speculations upon it. To have referred merely to the portrait of the state of society which others had drawn without reference to any particular theory, and unconnected with any practical inferences, would have been sufficient for his purpose. The prominent figure which some parts of it make, and the mode in which other features are thrown into the shade, in his eloquent sketch, may be thus easily accounted for. It forms the basis of all his subsequent reasonings ; had it not been for this, it would have been quite unnecessary to take any notice of it in an inquiry into the present state of the Highlands.

LORD SELKIRK describes every person, above the common rank, as having formerly depended for his safety and his consequence on the number and attachment of his servants and dependants : without people ready to defend him, he could not expect to sleep in safety, to preserve his house from pillage, or his family from murder. To this essential object, every inferior consideration was sacrificed ; and the principal



advantage of landed property consisted in the means it afforded to the proprietor of multiplying his dependants. By allowing his tenants to possess their farms at low rents, he secured their services whenever required; and, by the power of removing any one that was refractory, maintained over them the authority of a monarch. The tenant in fact paid his rent, not so much in money as in military services; and the proprietors seem never to have ventured to raise their rents.*

The rents however, it may be remarked, were low, not so much because the proprietor abstained from raising them in order to retain his power over his tenantry, as that in fact, in that rude state of society, he had no artificial wants to be gratified, which present such an increasing source of expence from their never-failing variety. Besides, by far the greatest part of his rents was paid in kind, or in services military personal or predial; very little was ever paid in money. Little alteration therefore could be expected to take place

* P. 11.

upon the rent payable in such a country as the Highlands then were. Considering the state of agriculture, the rents, though certainly not high, were not so perfectly trifling as is imagined; nor did they admit of any great or regular increase. If the tenant raised upon his farm enough to maintain his family and pay his landlord, it was all he ever thought of. The Highlands were not then in the state of an advancing country. They lay at the back of the world, if the vulgarism may be allowed; and it is only since the colonization of America that either the Highlands of Scotland or Ireland have risen into any importance. The whole trade of Scotland was formerly monopolised by the east coast. The Highlands exported nothing. They had no constant communication with any other country, to furnish the means of improvement, or an encouragement to attempt increasing their productiveness. How then could the rents be raised? But, if the lowness of the rent was merely to preserve the attachment of their tenantry, for the purposes of attack or defence, how comes it that those

proprieters did not raise their rents whose tenants owed no obedience to them, but were at the entire command of their chieftain? Those proprietors had not the same interest which Lord Selkirk assigns as the reason for their being satisfied with an inadequate rent. In short, the state of the rents arose solely from the state of the country; and, while that continued the same, no change in the rent could possibly take place.

The value of landed property, we are told by the Noble author, was in those times to be reckoned not by the rent it produced, but by the men whom it could send into the field. Under these circumstances, it was natural that every proprietor should wish to reduce his farms into as small portions as possible; and this inclination was most fully seconded by the dispositions of the people. The state of the country left a father no other means of providing for a numerous family, than by dividing his farm among them; and when two families could be placed on the land previously occupied by one, the proprietor acquired a new

tenant and a new soldier. From the operation of these principles, the land seems, in a great majority of cases, to have been divided into possessions barely sufficient for a scanty subsistence to the occupiers.*

But the state of occupation did not and could not result merely from the principle to which it is here ascribed. Every holder of a farm could not possibly expect to be called upon to act as a soldier. Amidst all the feuds of the Clans, it never was heard of that a chief went into the field with all or nearly all the inhabitants of his estate capable of bearing arms. In fact, the very same circumstance takes place wherever the same state of society is found. Land is, next to the beasts of the chase, the first source from which man derives his subsistence; and the idea of aiding the spontaneous productions of nature is the first exertion of industry which he makes. All have a connection with land, not from choice or affection, but from necessity.

* P. 13.

Where there is little accumulation of capital, the portion of land held by each must be nearly equal, and proportioned only to the wants of each family. Their only object is subsistence. They have neither the means nor the inclination to occupy more ground than can be converted to this purpose, without any very great exertion either of industry, which they are unwilling to bestow, or of skill, which they do not possess. There is little appearance that, in former times, the population of the Highlands ever encreased so as to have made it necessary to diminish the size of farms which were once occupied by fewer tenants and in larger proportions. The tendency of improvement, as skill and capital progressively encrease, is to enlarge the farms, and for one man to hire the labour of others, where he formerly depended solely on the labour of himself and his family. Indeed there were many causes which seem to have checked in the Highlands the natural tendency of population to encrease: among these may be ranked constant wars with the

Scottish and Norwegian Sovereigns, and among their own independent Clans, added to the inevitable consequence of every failure of a crop producing a famine. Till order and good government were established, and a communication opened with other parts of the world, the recurrence of similar calamities could not be prevented. These causes sufficiently account for a fact which could not be learned from the description of Lord Selkirk, that the country was peopled far below its resources; and that great tracts now cultivated and peopled were formerly waste. To such spots, any increase of the inhabitants would have naturally betaken themselves, as they have since done. But the reason why a farm appears divided among a number of tenants, interested in its labour and produce, is to be found in the necessity there was of creating in each individual an interest to protect his neighbour; and the principle of self preservation points out why the various occupiers of the same piece of ground clustered their several huts together. It is only in a state of security

that single families can venture to live out of the reach of protection against a superior force.

One reason, however, why in many cases the portions of land occupied by a family were small is totally overlooked by Lord Selkirk. Before any separation of professions takes place, every family performs for itself many offices; for which, in civilized life, it applies to others for assistance. But even after considerable progress has been made in the various arts of life, after one family occupies itself only in one effort of industry, and hires out its industry and skill to others, it is necessary in a thinly peopled country, where constant employment cannot be had, that a certain portion of land should be occupied by every man for the maintenance of his family. In no one district could an artisan in the Highlands find sufficient employment for furnishing a decent livelihood; and the little communication between one part of the country and another, prevented this deficiency from being supplied by the demand for his labour from any other quarter. In a country too, where a circulating

medium of exchange is little known, a proprietor, who receives almost all his rents in kind, is naturally induced to give portions of land for services which at more advanced periods of society would be rewarded by money. Hence the harper and more recently the piper of the chieftain always possessed a certain portion of land, as the wages he was entitled to for the exercise of his tuneful art. Every person was obliged to cultivate some small spot of ground at his leisure hours, to obtain for his family that subsistence which he could not derive without this aid from any other source. This was the result of necessity and not of choice, on the part both of the landlord and the tenant, and would naturally give place, like a combination of professions, to a better system, whenever a constant demand for the labour of any one artizan, furnished by the increasing populousness of the country, rendered it unnecessary. It has done so in all countries which have attained an ordinary degree of civilization.



It was, indeed, usual, we are further informed, for the head of a Clan, possessing extensive territories, occasionally to grant more considerable farms to the younger branches of the family ; but this circumstance had little effect on the general mode of agricultural management. The tacksmen (as the holders of such large farms were termed) were considered nearly in the same light as proprietors, and acted on the same principles. They were the officers who, under the chief, commanded in the military expeditions of the Clan. This was their employment ; and neither their own dispositions, nor the situation of the country, inclined them to engage in the drudgery of agriculture, any farther than to supply the necessaries of life for their own families. A part of their land was usually sufficient for this purpose ; and the remainder was let off in small portions to cotters who differed but little from the small occupiers who held their lands immediately from the chief, excepting that, in lieu of rent, they were bound to a certain amount of labour

for the advantage of their immediate superior. The more of these people any gentleman could collect around his habitation, with the greater facility could he carry on the work of his farm,—the greater too was his own personal safety. Besides this, the tacksmen, holding their lands from the Chiefs at a mere quit rent, were naturally solicitous to merit his favour, by the number of their immediate dependants, whom they could bring to join his standard ; and they had in fact no other means of employing to advantage the superfluity of their possessions, than by joining in the general system of the country, and multiplying the ultimate occupiers of the land *.

This last remark, that the tacksmen possessed no other means of employing the land which remained after supplying the wants of their own family, seems to account sufficiently for the fact of its being so employed, without adducing as its cause either the desire of pleasing the Chief by bringing more

* P. 14.

soldiers into the field, or a concern for their own safety, or the benefit of obtaining the work upon their farm easily and speedily executed. In fact, what else could a tacksman do, who had more land than he required to cultivate, but give it off to others, receiving from them an acknowledgement for it? He had neither the means nor desire of accumulating stock, which would only excite the avarice of some neighbour to drive it off, for it could consist only of cattle. The conduct of the tacksmen in subdividing their possessions was founded upon the shape and form which such a state of society must naturally assume, and not upon any of the artificial motives to which it has been ascribed. But so far was it from being merely because they held their lands at a quit rent, that the tacksmen followed their Chief to the field, that this was one of the tenures upon which they were entitled to hold their farms. In every respect they were so like proprietors that the same subordination of subtenant and cotter existed under them, as in the case of those from whom

they themselves derived their own title. This has been misapprehended by Lord Selkirk. For the subtenants, totally distinct from the cotters under the tacksmen, were in every point of view similar to the same class under the landlord, except in this, that the rent they paid was in general higher, and the services they performed more severe. Probably two-thirds of the whole tenantry were of this class. Among them, it will afterwards be seen, that emigration has chiefly prevailed ; and it will also be found that they neither have nor could have been supposed to have any feeling of pride which would rather lead them to America to find a farm which they must clear from wood and cultivate, than to become fishermen or crofters in this country immediately under the laird.

AFTER giving the description of society here adverted to, Lord Selkirk thus continues: These circumstances produced a state of manners, from which it is easy still to trace the most striking peculiarities of the Highlanders. The greatest part of the coun-

try was fit only for pasturage, and the small portions of arable land, which fell to the share of any family, could occupy but little of their time. On two or three occasions, in the course of the year, the labours of the field required a momentary exertion to prepare the soil, or secure the crop: But no regular or continued industry was necessary for providing the ample necessaries of life, to which their forefathers had been accustomed, and beyond which their ambition did not extend. The periods of labour were short; and they could dedicate the intermediate time to indolence or to amusement, unless when their assistance was required for the defence of their chief, or of their families, or for attacking some neighbouring clan. Prowess on these occasions was the most valuable quality they could possess, and that on which their pride was founded; warlike achievements engrossed their thoughts; and the amusements of their leisure hours generally consisted of active exercises, or displays of strength and agi-

lity, calculated to enhance their estimation as warriors *.

THE portrait which is thus drawn of the character and occupations of the Highlanders, in ancient times, is a very remarkable instance of the high colouring which the subject derives from the pen of Lord Selkirk. It is unquestionably true, that there can be no industry where there is no room for its employment. But were the labours of the Highlander, in former times, confined solely to sowing a few acres with grain, and reaping it when ripe; had he not his cattle at all seasons of the year to take care of; had he not the labour of procuring fuel constantly awaiting his leisure hours; and, can that man be entirely idle, who has almost every operation of domestic industry to perform, which he must always perform awkwardly, and therefore slowly?

THE ancient style of manners in the Highlands was more calculated certainly to form an

* P. 16.

intrepid than an industrious character : for the natural incitements to industry did not meet the attention so frequently and so strongly as to create any regular or vigorous exertion. But it is not hence to be inferred, that that vigour of mind and ardour of application, which prepare a man for habits of industry, were wholly unoccupied, or did not exist ; their exercise was only directed to those objects which the early stages of society present ; but which change their form and lose their attractions in the more civilized periods of society, leaving their place to be occupied by objects more beneficial to the country.

THE enthusiastic devotion with which each member of the clan looked up to its chieftain, is one of the most prominent, and at the same time the most artificial parts of the Highland character. But if Lord Selkirk attributes its rise, as he seems to do, to the original possession of the property parcelled out among the members of the clan, and supposes that it could only be maintained by unremitted attention to the arts of popularity, and un-

bounded generosity on the part of the chieftain, he seems altogether to have mistaken it. His view of it would limit its effects entirely to the connection formed between landlord and tenant, superior and vassal. But the chieftains sometimes possessed little or no property, and yet exerted their authority and their influence very widely, very often in opposition to the inclination and power of the immediate landlord. It had no absolute or decided connection with the feudal system. It preceded the introduction of that system, and was always independent of it. It was much more a patriarchal than a feudal attachment, though the forms of the feudal law came to be ingrafted upon it. It was the same form of government which formed the first rudiments of more artificial systems. Every member of the clan derived himself from the same stock with the chief, and looked upon himself as one of the children of his family. He desired not, nor expected, to be treated as an equal; his profound respect for his chief removed such a sentiment far from his mind.

But he looked for no glory except through him, and considered no calamity equal to that of his displeasure. His attachment was altogether unconnected with his interest or his ambition; it had the strength of a native instinct; and acted almost with its blindness. ‘Every duty, moral or political, was absorbed in affection and adherence to the chief. Not many years have passed since the clans knew no law but the laird’s will. He told them to whom they should be friends or enemies, what king they should obey, and what religion they should profess*.’ In the castle of the chief unbounded hospitality prevailed, not from any necessity of conciliating the attachment of their people, or any idea that this mode would be successful, but as a necessary result of the state of society. In a country which has neither foreign commerce, nor any of the finer manufactures, a great proprietor having nothing for which he can exchange the greater part of the produce of his lands, which is over and above the mainte-

* Johnson’s Journey, p. 196.

nance of the cultivators, consumes the whole in rustic hospitality at home. If this surplus produce be sufficient to maintain a hundred or a thousand men, he can make use of it in no other way than by maintaining a hundred or a thousand men *.

As a proof of what has been advanced, reference may be made to a very singular document, exhibiting a curious picture of the manners and state of society in this part of the kingdom in the 16th century. One of the enactments of the Scottish legislature †, for repressing commotions in the Highlands and borders, sets forth, that ‘clans dwell upon the
 ‘lands of diverse landlords, and depend upon
 ‘the direction of the captain, chief, or chief-
 ‘tain (by pretence of blood, or place of their
 ‘dwelling) although against the will oft-
 ‘times of the lord of the ground.’ From these last, therefore, hostages were not taken for the good behaviour of their tenants: it would have been unjust to have made them

* Wealth of Nations, B. 4. c. 4.

† Stat. 1587, c. 94.

liable for the conduct of those over whom they had no sort of control whatever. But hostages were taken from the chieftains for the good conduct of every person who belonged to the clan, whether he lived under the chieftain's immediate eye, under the direction of his tacksmen, or was resident upon the property of another from whom he derived right to the farm which he possessed, but to whom he neither owed nor paid any obedience. We thus find that the weakness of the government was obliged virtually to recognise an authority which resulted from the state of society, and which the attachment of their people continued voluntarily to confer upon their chief.

In the course of the subsequent pages, it will probably occur to the reader, why some parts of the sketch which is given by Lord Selkirk of the ancient manners have received so high a colouring: and the representation which is given of the effect produced upon the Highland character by the progress of improvement, will probably account for

some of the omissions which are to be met with in it. Amidst opinions and precepts, which are admitted to be so very novel, it was necessary for Lord Selkirk to maintain this idea of the origin of the connection between the chief and the members of the clan. This connection gave birth to most of those peculiarities in character, which were fast wearing away in this country, but which it was his object to preserve entire and undiluted in the New World. But how could it possibly be conceived that this tender plant should thrive amid the wilds of Canada, when transplanted from its native soil, and deprived of its natural nutriment. Lord Selkirk's opinions at once solve the difficulty; for if they be correct, he has nothing to do but to establish a feudal subordination similar to that of the tacksman, tenant, and cotter, in order to transfer to himself that blind devotion to a particular family, which can be traced back to the earliest dawn of society, and had received additional vigour from accumulating associations during subsequent ages.

II. LORD SELKIRK proceeds to remark, that the change which the state of society in the Highlands underwent, after the rebellion of 1745, was great and sudden. The final issue of that contest annihilated the independence of the chieftains; and the vigorous measures by which the victory of Culloden was followed gave to regular government an authority which it had never before possessed in that part of the kingdom. The kingdom was disarmed, and a sufficient force stationed in it to prevent any great and daring violation of the law.

The chiefs now ceased to be petty monarchs. The services of their followers were no longer requisite for defence, and could no longer be made use of for the plunder of a defenceless neighbour. They were reduced to the situation of any other proprietors: but they were not long in discovering, that, to subsist, a numerous train of dependants was not the only way in which their estates could be rendered of value; that the rents they received were far below those given for lands

of equal quality in other parts of the kingdom.

For a few years after the power of the chieftains was broken, the influence of old habits seems to have prevailed, and it was some time before any great change took place ; but, by degrees, the proprietors began to exact a rise of rent. Though the first demands of this kind were extremely moderate, the rents being still far below the real value of the lands, yet the circumstance was so unprecedented that great dissatisfaction ensued ; and the removal of some of the tenants, who refused to comply, excited still more indignation *.

To these circumstances, the demand of a rise of rent was partly owing ; but it was in part also owing to the peaceable state to which the country had now attained. Every man might now enjoy the fruits of his own industry ; and security never fails to produce both the means and desire of accumulation. By the intercourse with the southern provinces of the kingdom, an eager desire for

all the luxuries of an advanced state of society was introduced ; and a ready market was now opened for the productions of the country, which of course raised the value of the lands more nearly to a level with lands of a similar quality in other parts of the country : enabling them to pay, and inducing the proprietors to demand a better rent.

The progress of raising rents, and consequently of discontent and dispossession, the author informs us, was slow. The gentlemen, who had been educated amidst the habits of the feudal times, could not at once relinquish all the sentiments of their youth. The attachment of a numerous tenantry was of so flattering a nature, that it was often preferred to pecuniary advantages, and little alteration was made till the generation of old proprietors was extinct. Gradually, however, men educated under different circumstances, and feeling more remotely the influence of ancient connections with their dependants, succeeded, who were not inclined to sacrifice for a shadow the substantial advantage of a productive property ; the full

benefit of which, it is alledged, was inconsistent with retaining the population of their estates. This change, we are informed, has not yet taken place nearly to its full extent : But the Highlands are described to be at present in the crisis of change, which has ‘ yet to produce its entire and unimpaired effect, in a country still teeming with the superabundant population accumulated by the genius of the feudal times *.’ The full and entire effect thus anticipated, it is not disguised, will be to drive out the largest proportion of the present inhabitants, as ‘ a few shepherds with their dogs will be found sufficient for all the profitable work of an extensive range of land †.’

Effects which are ascribed to such a general cause must have taken place in every country which is now improved and civilized, where the feudal system and its accompanying manners have been formerly prevalent. We are not therefore called upon to contemplate in the contrast between the present and former state

* P. 37.


† P. 30.



of the Highlands, an insulated and solitary fact in the progress of society, for which we shall in vain seek a parallel among other nations. History will teach us the course which other nations have pursued in advancing from a similar state of society to improvement and civilization ; and by examining the effects produced in these instances by the operation of the same causes, we shall perhaps be able to account for those peculiar and unfortunate occurrences with which they are combined in the Highlands. We need not go beyond the limits of our island for examples. The same change we know has been effected in the Lowlands of Scotland and in England.

The change which took place in England was during the time of Henry VII. who was enabled, partly thro' the losses sustained by the great barons during the contest for the crown between the houses of York and Lancaster, and partly through the power of the commons, to finish the efforts of preceding monarchs to crush the power of the feudal aristocracy. A new order had been gradually

rising in the state ; towns had been built and made independent of their superiors ; and every encouragement, which policy could suggest, was held out to promote their welfare. The rise of the commons was thus gradual and progressive ; and, with them, as being then incapable of injuring the royal prerogative, the sovereign always allied himself as a counterpoise to the great power of the barons. When the army of retainers, which each had formerly maintained, was dismissed by means of the vigorous administration of Henry, they retired into the neighbouring towns and villages, which, from the advanced state of the country, were sufficiently numerous to absorb all the industrious part of those who were displaced. We hear of no emigrations in consequence of this change. Complaints were indeed made, and statutes enacted regarding the depopulation of the kingdom : but the appearances of depopulation were entirely fallacious. The people merely changed their residence from the country to the towns ; and the eye, which



observed a ruined cottage or deserted farm, forgot to examine the neighbouring village, which would have accounted for the apparent deficiency. The kingdom at large profited greatly by the change: the industry of the country was conducted by fewer hands, while the industry of the towns was benefited by the additional influx of labour. But it was not till nearly a century afterwards that the settlements in America carried off any of the population of England.

The accounts handed down to us of the state of the borders between England and Scotland, and of the opinions and employment of the hostile clans of that district of country, shew that the same system of manners at one time prevailed there that till lately existed in the Highlands. In the series of acts of parliament formerly referred to, as having been enacted in 1587, for settling the peace of the country, we find that one third of the troublesome clans, of whom hostages were required, resided upon the borders. But now the same regularity and industry distinguishes that portion of the empire which

is to be found in the rest of the Lowlands. This is the more similar to the change that is taking place in the Highlands, that the country is chiefly occupied in pasturing sheep : yet we do not find any great and increasing emigrations to a foreign country. We only see the rise of the towns of Selkirk, Hawick, Langholm, and several others in that quarter, by the gradual and silent influx of the now unemployed inhabitants of the country.

It is true, indeed, that the change in the Highlands has been ‘ great and sudden : ’ it is owing to this very circumstance that, in its effects, the change has been attended by any thing so very unusual or so inconsistent with national improvement as emigration. The country, in fact, was not ripe for the change. It was brought about by violence against the natural course of advancement, and consequently before provision had been made for such a step.

Previous to the various measures adopted by government, in consequence of the victory at Culloden, the Highlands were as

completely separated from the Lowlands of Scotland, as if these two districts had been under independent sovereigns. A distinct origin, opposite manners, a different language, guarded still more than even their then unaccessible mountains, the purity of their race from the effects of foreign intermixture, or even the influence of foreign intercourse. The state of society was entirely pastoral; neither towns nor villages had arisen among them. The powerful aristocracy and the system of clanship remained in their original strength; and no new order had arisen in the state, through whose influence the sovereign of this country, independently of the power acquired by the right of conquest, could have destroyed the aristocracy. This, however, was effected almost instantaneously by the sovereign of the British Isles. Ages probably would have elapsed before such an event could have taken place from the internal energies of the country itself. Towns and villages must have previously arisen; commerce and industry must have been in some degree introduced; and the change would have

operated gradually and silently as it has done in other countries. The demand for an increased rent, under such circumstances, if accompanied by dissatisfaction, would have been unattended by emigration: the discontented population of the country would have been absorbed into the towns; giving a spur to their industry from the additional capital carried into them as well as by the diminished price of labour from the competition created by the numbers now looking for employment.

Nor let it be supposed that there is any thing in the disposition of a Highlander which could have prevented the universal rule from operating in this case as in every other. This is insinuated by Lord Selkirk; but most certainly he is mistaken. For in all the emigrations which have been occasioned more by the mode of management on the part of the proprietor, than of caprice on the part of the tenant, wherever there was any opportunity, from the near neighbourhood of a village or town, instead of wandering to the distant wilds of America, the dispossessed

tenants and cotters there took up their abode. There they turned their attention to the occupation most congenial to their temper and feelings. Most unfortunately for them and for the country, these opportunities were few indeed. Thus we learn, that ‘ one fourth of the parish (of Kilmalie) is still under black cattle, and contains as great a number of people as ever; and of those who have been dispossessed, very few have quitted the parish. They go and reside at Maryburgh, as several also do from neighbouring parishes, which accounts for the increasing populousness of that village *.’ The very same circumstance is mentioned by the well informed author of the account of the parish of Boleskine. The change of system, ‘ when the principal tacksmen exchanged their former tenants and dependents for a flock of south country sheep,’ we are told, ‘ has turned out much to the advantage of the tenantry, who thereupon retired to the town of Inverness,

* Statist. Acc. of Scotl. vol. 8 p. 427.

‘ and applied themselves to manufacturing
‘ industry *.’

These facts are of importance, as they are the result of experience : and if they should be adverse to the theoretical conclusions which have been drawn from the supposed character of the Highlanders, the reflecting mind will have no difficulty in deciding between them. Such indeed is the versatile nature of man, and such the facility with which he adapts himself to the varying pursuits of life, that it is impossible to reason *a priori* how he will be able to act in untried scenes, or to what a pitch his exertions will raise him when spurred on by necessity.

The above are recent instances of the dispossessed tenantry betaking themselves quietly to the industry of the towns. But a moment’s reflection must teach us, that as Highland manners were once much more extensive in Scotland than they now are, and as no complaints have been made, till within

* Statist. Acc. of Scotl. vol. 20. p. 26.

these few years, of violent and frequent emigrations, the change must have produced effects extremely different from those which are predicted to be its never-failing accompaniments. On examining a document formerly referred to, it will be found, that the estates of many of those, who were obliged to give hostages for their tenants, are situated on the borders of the Highlands, which form now as quiet and well ordered a part of the kingdom as is to be found within the compass of the island. The feudal system and clanship existed just as strongly there as it did in any part of the Highlands previous to the year 1745; and yet, without any emigration to America, an encroachment has been made upon the former modes of life, and manner of occupying the land, all along the borders of the Highlands from Dunbarton to Aberdeen. Any supernumerary population has been suitably disposed of, not dismissed; and the country has assumed the character best adapted to the advancement of its prosperity: it has become, in every respect, similar to the Lowlands, from which it cannot

now be distinguished. The towns of Dunbarton, Greenock, Glasgow, Paisley, Stirling, Montrose, Forfar, Aberdeen, and innumerable villages have received the population, and have been enabled to employ it in the useful industry which has been so beneficial to Scotland. The farms have by degrees been assuming the size thought most convenient, and acquiring the stock deemed most advantageous; but the numbers of the people have not upon the whole been diminished : On the contrary, this change of employment has given birth to greater and more profitable industry ; and, without these supplies, the trade and manufactures of this country never could have made the rapid progress they have done within the last fifty years. No spot in the Highlands is oftener visited by travellers than Lochlomond ; and we need only remark the population employed on the banks of the river Leven, and the productive effects of the industry there exerted, as a specimen of what it is possible for the Highlanders to attain, at some future, perhaps not very distant period. A great part of the displaced

tenantry of Argylshire has found employment there. Various other situations afford similar advantages.

Since the security of the kingdom, however, has obliged government to introduce regulations for repressing the power of the Highland Chieftains ; since power consists no longer in men, but in money, as it does in every civilized or improving country ; and since a man's power of commanding the labours of others, is just equal to the quantity of money he can give in exchange for it ; it cannot surely be either wondered at or lamented, that the desire of bettering the condition in which we are placed, which is the universal passion and the spring of every improvement, should influence the conduct of many of the Highland proprietors. But the right of conquest having been exercised, the revolution from the one state to the other has unfortunately been rapid and premature. It is then the duty of Government, whose conduct has made the agricultural improvement of the country produce effects so very unusual and destructive, to provide whatever means can be

devised, consistently with national policy and the constitution of a free state, for averting as much as possible the evils attending the loss of so much capital and industry to the country.

III. Seemingly conscious that the same effects which had attended the breaking up of the feudal system in other countries, should have occurred in the Highlands, Lord Selkirk proceeds to remark, that, ‘ in one very
‘ important circumstance, the ancient state of
‘ the Highlands differed remarkably from the
‘ rest of the kingdom ;—every spot was occupied by nearly as many families as the produce of the land could subsist *.’ This must indeed be allowed to be a most singular fact in political oeconomy, and it is a solitary instance ; for even the great and populous empire of China is found to possess, within its immense compass, vast quantities of waste land which would admit of a greater number of inhabitants than it at present maintains.

With a vigorous and patriotic government, an industrious and sober people, a mild cli-

* P. 25.

mate and productive soil, and in a country where agriculture is made a public concern, it might have been expected, that we should find, if we were to meet with it any where, every spot occupied by nearly as many families as the produce of the land could subsist. But Lord Selkirk desires us to look for an example of this singular fact to the Highlands of Scotland immediately after the victory of Culloden—to the inhabitants of a country whose manners were lawless and chiefs independent,—constantly at enmity with each other,—suffering from an unsettled government, the miseries of famine, and the destructive effects of war—with a climate not uncommonly favourable to the productions of nature, and a soil by no means supplying this defect. The observation must be allowed at least to have the attraction of novelty in its favour.

It can scarcely be conceived how it should have escaped Lord Selkirk, that this is so far from being the case, that, by more vigorous exertion, and under a better system of agriculture, the land has even already been

made to yield a much greater quantity of food than it formerly furnished. Indeed it will be found in all those districts where sheep-farming has not been introduced, that the increase of population has amply kept pace with the increase of subsistence; so that, upon the whole, the Highlands are now much more populous than they were fifty years ago, and that many districts, which formerly imported grain when the inhabitants were fewer, now need no foreign supply. As long as there is waste land which can be cultivated, it will be found in every country which is poor, and where the tenantry of course partake of the general poverty, that the only way in which this can be done, is by invigorating the exertions of the labourers, by securing to them the fruits of their toil, by possession of the land which they have improved. Till the whole, which can be made productive, is cultivated, it never can be true, that there are 'more people than are necessary for carrying on the work that

‘ must be done *.’ Most assuredly it cannot be said that the Highlands either in the present, or at any former time, have attained this pitch of agricultural perfection.

Lord Selkirk sometimes speaks of the country ‘ as teeming with the superabundant population accumulated by the genius of the feudal times †.’ By this phrase, it cannot possibly be meant, that the population exceeded the productive powers of the country for procuring subsistence. In this sense the population cannot possibly be said to have been superabundant; for the country now maintains not only the same number of inhabitants it did before the year 1745, but even a much larger number. If there be any meaning at all in these high sounding words, it must be this, that the population, under the feudal system of manners, was greater than is required at a more improved period of society for procuring the same quantity of subsistence from the ground. There cannot be a doubt of this. Perhaps few persons then exclusively devoted themselves to agriculture: each family

† P. 37.

had to perform for itself many of the operations of domestic industry which, in a more advanced age, become separate professions; and occasional predatory excursions demanded a portion of their time from their other concerns. Each family was satisfied with procuring subsistence,—they could have no object in accumulation,—there was no means of exporting their own produce, and exchanging it with the produce of other countries. As they had no wants to supply from abroad, they could do nothing else than make use of the whole produce of their country: more was not raised than was necessary for this purpose. But when the state of the country enables the inhabitants to accumulate stock with perfect security; and the introduction of new wants makes it an object to do this as cheaply as possible, and to employ themselves exclusively in it, are we to rest satisfied with the same quantity of produce which the country formerly yielded? and is all the labour, which is not required for this

purpose, to be considered useless, and the population to be called superabundant? We may now see whether the statement of the argument be correct, when it is said, that ‘the fact in reality amounts to this, that the produce of the country, instead of being consumed by a set of intrepid but indolent military retainers, is applied to the support of peaceable and industrious manufactures* in other parts of the country. Would not all this take place in a much higher degree, if the country was made productive to the utmost extent of its resources, by taking the full benefit of the present population. Many more manufacturers would be encouraged for supplying their wants, and a much greater quantity of surplus produce would be sent out of the country in return for the productions of their skill. The ground, which is now waste, would become fertile; and the people, who would otherwise be obliged to weaken our national system, by

* P. 77.

deserting the country, be usefully and happily employed at home.

In mountainous districts, we are told, when a considerable population is collected into one spot, it is only where a number of hands are required for working mines, or where the abundance of coal has led to the establishment of manufactures. ‘ In the Highlands, (Lord Selkirk continues) there are few mines, and these of little consequence ; the country is entirely destitute of coals ; and though the inhabitants have an opportunity of supplying themselves with peat or turf from the mosses, yet this is by a process so expensive and precarious, in a rainy climate, that this fuel is by no means a complete substitute for coals, and is of very inferior value. *’ These statements lead to the following train of reasoning. ‘ The Highlands are, therefore, on a par with the mountains in the south of Scotland, and those on the borders of the two kingdoms, with a great part of Cumberland and

* P. 28.

‘ Westmoreland, of North Wales; and some
 ‘ other mountainous districts in England. In
 ‘ such mountainous regions, the most pro-
 ‘ fitable employment of land is universally
 ‘ found to be in rearing young cattle and
 ‘ sheep; which, at a proper age, are bought
 ‘ by farmers in more fertile countries, and
 ‘ fattened for the butcher.’ The conclusion
 of the whole is, that, from the prevalence of
 the same circumstances, it must be expected
 that the lands in the Highlands will fall into
 the same general style of management; and
 that ‘ a few shepherds and their dogs will
 ‘ be found sufficient for all the profitable
 ‘ work of an extensive range of land *; and
 ‘ therefore a great part of the present inha-
 ‘ bitants of the Highlands must, in one way
 ‘ or another, seek for means of livelihood
 ‘ totally different from those on which they
 ‘ have hitherto depended †.’


This is the foundation of the whole of
 Lord Selkirk’s doctrines: if natural causes

* P. 29.

† P. 37-

oppose any other mode of employing those hardy and intrepid mountaineers, it would be idle to resist the future progress of American colonization. For experience teaches us, that the conclusion of the ingenious author is but too just, that wherever the sheep-farming system has prevailed, according to the rash and unskilful mode in which that has too often been introduced, the old occupiers of the land have been displaced; and it seems probable that the same consequences will accompany it into many other districts of the country.

To those who consider the Highlands as fit only for breeding and rearing sheep for the rest of the island, this change will be looked upon as the most advantageous which can happen: as the fewer people are employed in sending the produce of the earth to market, the occupier will be enabled to send a greater quantity, and thus increase the national wealth. But is it certain that this system of depopulation is really the most advantageous for the country? Does the climate



and situation of the country present no other means of making it productive? Is it impossible that numerous improvements, requiring additional labourers, should be made upon the present agricultural system? Do the seas which surround the Highlands furnish no object for the employment of those who leave their farms? Is the inexhaustible supply of peat so poor a substitute for coals as to be a bar to the introduction of all kinds of manufactures? These are serious and important questions well worthy of attentive consideration.

From the experience of some late years, these questions meet with a most satisfactory answer. It will be found quite unnecessary for the population to seek for lands to cultivate in America, or for the proprietors to look only to a flock of sheep as the means of obtaining an adequate rent. It is very true that a small mountainous and inland district, in the neighbourhood of rich and fertile fields, will be best employed in rearing young cattle, which may be exchanged for the

corn of the immediately adjacent district. But it is a very different case, when a whole country is to be appropriated to this purpose; when the inhabitants are to be removed to another region, and the supplies of the necessaries of life are to be brought from a great distance. This condemns it to a stationary condition for ever: the proprietors have no chance of increasing their rents by agricultural exertion: the country never can advance; its resources never can be drawn forth. If it possess arable land, that will of course yield an inferior produce; and the fleeces of its flocks must be sent out of it for the purpose of being manufactured. But these points will more naturally solicit our attention afterwards: in the mean time, it will be sufficient to observe, that, to every one, the aspect of the country has not appeared in the same light that it has done to Lord Selkirk. So far from being similar to the mountainous districts in the south, and adapted to the same mode of culture, the two countries are pronounced to be 'very

' different productions of nature. The Che-
 ' viots are a congeries of tall hillocks without
 ' regular vallies, and with little or no bottom
 ' lands between them. The Highlands, on
 ' the contrary, are formed of long ridges of
 ' mountains intersected by extended vallies,
 ' some of them of considerable width, con-
 ' taining lands well fitted, by soil and situa-
 ' tion, for arable lands of the first quality:
 ' and even supposing a general plan of sheep-
 ' farming to be practicable, it would perhaps
 ' be found most profitable to keep these lands
 ' under a course of cultivation *.' Such is
 the opinion of one of the first rural econo-
 mists of the age, a man whom no local pre-
 judices could possibly bias in favour of this
 opinion.

Lord Selkirk himself adds an unintentional
 testimony to the same truth: indeed, it is
 not unusual for him to take the trouble of
 answering himself: he tells us that in the
 island of South Uist alone, the extent of

* Survey of the Centr. High. by Mr Marshall,

good land, though not accurately surveyed, seems to be at least thirty square miles, besides ten or twelve times as much moorish pasture, partly improveable; and we find no obstacle alleged against its being as productive as it ought to be, except the miserable style of agriculture under which it is managed †. Now, in which of the districts to which his Lordship has compared the Highlands is this applicable? Would it be more advantageous to devote the whole of this island to pasturage, and import its whole supply of grain? Lord Selkirk himself has answered this in the negative; and every person who is acquainted with the subject knows that in this he is correct. It may be added, that no mountainous country in the world affords such a facility as the Highlands for the formation of good roads, which may be made nearly upon a level throughout the whole country: in addition to this, it is intersected in a very remarkable manner with arms of

† Appendix, p. 47.

the sea, affording all the means of internal navigation. These circumstances point out the Highlands, if other causes concur, as much more adapted for agriculture, for internal commerce, and for manufactures than any other of the mountainous districts to which it has been compared.

IV. The ingenious author now proceeds to a branch of his subject, which, to his system, is extremely important; namely, the choice of employment to which the tenantry may have resource on being dispossessed of their farms. To them, as well as to the cotters, who, by the same progress of improvement, are deprived of their situation and livelihood, two different resources, we are told, present themselves. They know that, in the low country of Scotland, and particularly in the manufacturing towns, labour will procure them good wages: they know likewise that in America the wages of labour are still higher; and that, from the moderate price of land, they may expect to obtain not only the pos-

session of a farm, but an absolute property.

Of these alternatives, it is added, every one who is acquainted with the country must admit that emigration is by far most likely to suit the inclinations and habits of the Highlanders*.

It is possible that, if there really exist a necessity for the people leaving the Highlands, it may have been at one time with many, and may still with some, be the most congenial to their insulted feelings, to leave the country, which, like an unnatural mother, seems to have turned out her unoffending offspring to the world, houseless and friendless. The Highlander, too, may have formerly felt a national dislike at forming any settlement in the low country, which it would require strong inducements to overcome. But now that these antipathies are wearing out, and that the harsh shades in the character of the separate clans are by degrees softening from more frequent intercourse, can we suppose that men, so peculiar-

* P. 47.

ly devoted to their country, will resolutely insist upon quitting it? The introduction of a new system, by which, in a few instances, some may have been dispossessed of farms, which they looked upon to be as much the inheritance of their families, as the estate was of the landlord who dispossessed them, would naturally excite great irritation and discontent. But can we suppose that the same feelings now operate, when the frequency of the occurrence has prepared them for the event. The first idea may have been to abandon the country entirely; and discontent would carry them out of sight of those well known objects of endearment which had twined themselves round their hearts. Now, if it be at all necessary to displace them, (as it most certainly is not,) they must view their situation with more calmness,—they can see its approach at a distance,—they can prepare themselves for its consequences,—and they may hope, by the exertion of industry, again to revisit in comfort and ease the scenes of their youth, provided they do not place the

wide atlantic between them and their strongest passions. Such unquestionably are the feelings of these people, if freely left to the impulse of their own hearts; and accordingly they would do almost any thing rather than leave their own country; and would contentedly endure poverty, and all its ills, if they could but hope that their bones should repose with the ashes of their fathers.

Admitting, however, with Lord Selkirk, that the Highlander, upon being dispossessed of his farm, must have emigrated either to America, or to the low country of Scotland; and that this same alternative, and no other, will ever open to him, experience seems scarcely to justify the conclusion, that, with
 ‘ a very few exceptions, we find the choice
 ‘ of the Highlanders has been entirely regulated by their ability or inability to afford
 ‘ the expences of their passage to America* ;’
 for the idea of emigration to America, after

* P. 55.

the resolution was taken of quitting the Highlands, seems to have been often as much the result of necessity as of choice ; it seems to have been confined entirely to particular districts of the country ; to those which are remote from the manufacturing counties of the south, or from the few towns in the Highlands to which the people could retire. When they were all at once dispossessed, and in great numbers, and no new agricultural employments provided for them ; all except those, who could find occupation in the fisheries, were obliged to leave the country. Thus, from the county of Argyle, which many years ago set the example of this new system of management, it is a very well known fact that emigration at no time has been great. The fisheries employed a considerable number : a still greater number were required for navigating the shipping belonging to the Clyde ; but by far the greatest proportion removed to the manufacturing towns upon that river. It has only been in such districts as are remote,

from the Lowlands, and with which the communication is both distant and difficult, that emigration has taken place to the injury of the state : this difficulty is so much increased, and this distance so much magnified by the ignorance of the people, that the direct communication between America and the west coast of the Highlands was at one time (though the assertion may appear singular) easier and more regular than with the low country of Scotland. This circumstance, then, of remoteness or nearness to any place, which could absorb the labour of the dispossessed peasantry, seems hitherto to have regulated the desire to emigrate, among those who could afford to pay for the passage. As the country goes on improving both by a readier communication, and by the introduction of industry, the effects of this circumstance must be much more universally prevalent.

Whenever emigration has taken place, it may be very true that ‘ the emigrants ‘ have been almost entirely of the class ‘ of tenants ; while the cotters, whom the

‘ same change of agricultural system has
 ‘ deprived of their situation and livelihood,
 ‘ have in general removed into the ma-
 ‘ nufacturing districts of the south of Scot-
 ‘ land *.’ But, though formerly, before
 proper employment could be held out for
 the inhabitants in the more remote parts
 of the country, this statement may be cor-
 rect, still it will be found that the small te-
 nants have just as little inclination to emi-
 grate as the cotters, out of whose reach it is
 said always to have been placed. It will be
 found much more universal than the favour-
 ers of emigration will chuse to avow, that
 wherever proper attention has been paid to
 provide employment for them, they have not
 shewn themselves so discontented with the
 change as rather to abandon their country
 than betake themselves to a new branch of
 industry. Very possibly they would have
 preferred continuing the occupation which
 their fathers followed before them ; but it has

* P. 57.

cost them a much less effort to leave one line of life and adopt another, than to take such an immense voyage as that to America for the sake of pursuing their former employment. Although this may be inconsistent with theory, it is still most strictly conformable to fact, which many proprietors who have made the experiment can amply testify. In the course of these remarks, this will be made abundantly evident ; but, in the meantime, the following striking instance may be given in the present situation of those Highlanders who originally composed the Canadian regiment raised in 1802. Great temptations were held out by government, and liberal promises of grants of land were given, for the purpose of raising that regiment ; nor can it be supposed that these inducements would be diminished in the representation of those who recruited it. In general the men were of the class of tenantry, with the usual portion of the pride of independence, which they are supposed peculiarly to possess. When they were disbanded, it was

impossible for them to return to the Highlands, as their places had been filled up upon quitting the country; a few only were disposed of in this way: and but few would consent to enter into a marching regiment, their conditions of service having been so much more inviting, and the experience of the treatment they were led to expect not being calculated to overcome their dislike. By far the greatest number are therefore at this moment employed, and happily employed, as labourers in the neighbourhood of Glasgow. They have neither inclination nor intention to emigrate, because they are now no longer in the rank of tenants, their situation being extremely comfortable, from the increasing price of labour. Their children, too, have an opportunity of very early being of use to their parents, by being employed in the manufactories, to which their habits cannot be averse, whatever may be said of those of their parents.

All Lord Selkirk's reasonings upon the necessity of emigration are drawn from those

districts into which sheep-farming has been introduced ; the effects of which seemed best to suit his colonizing views. But the prevalence of this system has hitherto been only local and partial ; and any person, in the slightest degree acquainted with the subject upon which he has undertaken to enlighten the public, knows that by far the greatest proportion of the districts, from which emigration has taken place, neither have been yet stocked with sheep, nor are fit for being so. It is a fact, too, that emigration began before this system was heard of. The first colony of Highlanders, who went to America, was in the year 1735, to the settlement of Georgia ; an emigration neither numerous nor respectable ; but which was occasioned by the encouragement given by government to settlers. It was intended for the protection of Carolina from the inroads of the Spaniards. The greatest emigration, however, which took place, and which has been repeated at certain intervals since, was from Skye and North Uist about the year

1770, occasioned solely by a demand for an increase of rent, which later events have shewn the tenants could have perfectly well afforded to pay, but which they chose to resist, being contrary to what they conceived to be their rights. Several of the tacksmen, men of some property, of education and skill, having a very great influence over their subtenants and cotters, settled with them in North Carolina. The emigration went on regularly for several years, arrangements being always made to accommodate the people in the one country before they left the other. Not many years afterwards the same event happened, exactly from the same cause, from South Uist, from Glengarry's country, and from Appin. The emigrants from this last district joined the settlement in Carolina; while those from the other two, who were almost all Roman Catholics, emigrated to Canada, which now belonged to the British empire, and where that religion was extremely prevalent. All of these were led by discontented men of a superior class, who refused

to pay an adequate rent, and who stirred up as many as they possibly could to accompany their flight, for the sake of profitably establishing themselves in America. If it were possible for Highlanders to be more comfortable and happy any where else than in their own country, it could be looked for only from emigrations conducted in this manner. But when the sheep-farming system was introduced, and many Scotch settlers had obtained grants of uncultivated land in America, the mode and necessity of emigration became extremely different. Those who were dispossessed had no time to look about them to form any future plan at home ; and it was only those of the poorer sort who ever thought of such a step as going to America. For by this time the tacksmen had found their way into the British army ; they did not emigrate, and therefore did not incline to conduct a systematic emigration ; while, on the other hand, those who had previously emigrated, finding the advantage of having more labourers, assailed the poor and the ignorant tenant

on every side with golden dreams of wealth and happiness, and fixed his wavering resolution. After the establishment of the independence of the United States, when every effort was made by the Americans to improve their territory; and when we also endeavoured to strengthen our colonies, by giving settlements in Canada to the loyalists as well as to the army who had served in the war, the incitements to emigration were again renewed with surprising success; till at length an universal fever raged throughout the country, extending over every district, whether capable of being stocked with sheep or not, and affecting every person, whether capable of labour or not:—being as disadvantageous to the country to which they flocked, as hurtful to the country from which they were flying; and, in both, calling loudly for legislative interference.

V. The political effects of the emigrations from the Highlands next claim the discussion of the enlightened author. These, however, he has confined entirely to the supposed loss

of that valuable supply of soldiers which the public service has hitherto derived from the Highlands. Before proceeding to examine the author's views upon this subject, it is necessary to consider minutely the loss which the country sustains by the desertion of so many of her hardy sons.

The advantage which a country derives from its population depends much upon the character of the people; whether they be sober, industrious, and warlike; or luxurious, idle, and effeminate. One who could have no local attachments to prejudice his estimate of the Highland character thus sketches it: 'It is strongly marked, unusual circumstances having concurred in forming it. It might be wrong, however, to attempt its history here. It may be sufficient to say, that out of the aggregate of these circumstances grew a strongly featured character; inquisitive to gain information; cautious to retain it; and artful and active in applying it to advantage: Features which, though somewhat altered by a

‘ change of circumstances, still mark to this
 ‘ day the Highland character. I must not,
 ‘ however, omit in this place to do justice to
 ‘ the moral character of the modern High-
 ‘ lander. Murder, cruelty, and even theft,
 ‘ are rarely heard of ; nor are riotings, drunk-
 ‘ enness, or any kind of debaucheries, at pre-
 ‘ sent prevalent among them, comparatively,
 ‘ at least, with other districts of the island *.’

In addition to this, it may be mentioned, that, at Inverary, where all criminal causes are tried for the southern Highlands, not a single criminal was executed from the year 1754 to the year 1803 ; and at Inverness, where the criminal causes for the rest of the Highlands are brought to trial, nearly the same picture of good conduct is to be found. Such is the character of those men whom the principles of this work doom to perpetual banishment ; and such are the dispositions which might direct their industry to the good of their country.

* Survey of Centr. Highl. p. 18.

The direct loss sustained by this country in consequence of these emigrations, is much more than is perhaps at first perceived. History teaches us, that the internal strength of a nation is in no case to be estimated by the extent of its territory, but by the number of its citizens, and the utility of their labours : that the population, the wealth, and the power of a state cannot be supported with permanence by any resources exclusive of home-productions raised and augmented by an increasing improvement of the soil. Other sources of wealth may be cut off by political convulsions; but nothing short of a convulsion of nature, annihilating the fund upon which national industry is to be exercised, can destroy the basis of national wealth derived from the population and produce of the country itself. While there exists an acre of uncultivated and waste land within the country ; or a market for the fish which swarm upon our coasts ; or sale for the manufactured produce of our industry, every man who leaves the country must be considered as a national loss.

An estimate of this loss may be made from the following considerations.

1. The emigrants, we are informed by Lord Selkirk, form the greatest number of those who are dispossessed. Data, however, are not furnished for ascertaining what that number is; but it appears that it amounts, in the sheep-farming districts, to at least three-fourths of the population of the country. Admitting again that, on Lord Selkirk's principles, only two-thirds of this number leave the country, (the other third not being able to pay for their passage, or not chusing to bind themselves as slaves to defray the freight,) it will be at once seen what a number of able active citizens are lost to the state for ever. The industry thus transferred to another country is very great. But there is not only this loss in expectancy; there is also the direct loss of the expence of the maintenance of all the grown persons who emigrate; these may be reckoned at three out of every five. While children, they were ne-

cessarily maintained by the nation, and the whole which was then consumed is thus left unrequited; for at the very time that they are in a capacity of remunerating the state by their industry, they abandon the country. There is also a serious loss in point of population. For although all the children under five years of age were to be cut off, it is very doubtful whether the effective population would be at all injured; other children would immediately supply the place thus vacated for them. The expence of the maintenance of those cut off would be very trifling. But on the other hand, while it must be very long before a nation could recover the loss of all the young men and women between 20 and 25 years of age, the expence of their maintenance thus lost would be very considerable. It need scarcely be added that the effect of a decrease of population is to cause an encrease in the price of labour, which again throws the most powerful bar in the way of all kinds of improvement. In some places of the Highlands, the advance, in point

of wages, has been greatly disproportionate to what has taken place in the low country.

2. We are informed by Lord Selkirk, and it is indeed a well known fact, that the emigrants carry out with them much more money than it could have been conceived possible for persons in their situation to possess. An account is given of one whose capital amounted to L. 116. as a specimen of what others in a similar rank, and that not very high, might be possessed of. Many carry out much more with them, even to the extent of L. 1000. By far the greater proportion, however, transport along with themselves a great deal less. Suppose, that on an average each person carries out L. 30. it will be at once seen, that besides the quantity of productive industry, the nation is also deprived of a very considerable quantity of capital, amply sufficient for putting that industry and much more into motion. In the year 1802, it is known, that 4510 emigrants, independently of the passage money, took with them above

L. 100,000. in cash*. The industry of a country being always in proportion to the capital which excites it, the capital is reciprocally increased by the industry which circulates it; and a capital is always the more advantageous according to the use which is made of it. If it be hoarded up in gold and silver, it affords no profit to the state; if it be employed in exerting agricultural industry, it is the most beneficial mode of employing it. Its loss is so much the more to be deplored. The expences of national defence must always remain the same, while the same territory is to be defended. But if, instead of deserting the country, the capital and additional industry of the emigrants remained to operate on each other, the burden of the expences of the state would fall lighter upon the community at large.

3. It is no doubt true, that the emigrants, when in America, will still have a demand for various manufactures with which we sup-

* App. C. to Third Rep. on Coasts, &c. of Scotland.

ply that great continent. They will thus in some measure encourage our national industry and advance our commerce. But this operation turns the capital and industry of the country from the home trade into a foreign trade of consumption; from a trade where the returns are quick, to one where they are comparatively very slow; from a trade which brings the market as it were into the centre of every Highland estate, to one which removes it to the opposite shores of the Atlantic. If the emigrants can be usefully employed in this country, their whole capital and labour is employed for the advantage of the state; and, after furnishing their necessities and ministering to their convenience, the surplus is exchanged for the produce of other countries. While, on the other hand, when they have emigrated, and no longer add to the population and protection of the state, it is only a part of this surplus which they exchange for such of our productions as they require or can afford to procure. Industry at home must in

the meantime languish exactly in proportion as these emigrations occasion a loss of market at home ; and still more from making the market which is created abroad comparatively disadvantageous. They add in no other way to our national resources, as our colonies on the other side of the Atlantic have never contributed either to our defence or the expences of our government.

4. It has hitherto been taken for granted that the emigration is to our own colonies. But in former times this has not always been the case ; as they have very commonly gone to increase the wealth and power of a state fast rising to commercial eminence : So that every person who leaves the Highlands, and settles in the United States, inflicts a double wound upon the power and resources of his native country. This is indeed a very serious evil.

The political effects then of emigration seem to be loss of population, and consequently of national strength—loss of capital, and conse-

quently encrease of national burdens—loss of industry, and consequently of the means of supplying these defects. If we are not mistaken, the loss in point of population is a loss greatly and sincerely to be lamented; for we cannot agree with Lord Selkirk in thinking that, ‘independently of depopulation, that nursery of soldiers which has hitherto been found in the Highlands cannot continue.’ It is very true that the composition of the Highland regiments is now in some degree changed*; that the clan does not now fight under the chief, nor the different companies under the hereditary officers; that as the rents are raised and money preferred to men, a regiment in the Highlands must now be recruited pretty much in the same way as in any other part of the country. But can it be disputed that the hardy mountaineers of our native country possess in no common degree those qualities

* P. 67.

which fit them for modern warfare, where so much depends upon strength of body and energy of mind. Can the jail sweepings of a great town, or the enfeebled inmates of a manufactory, be compared with Highlanders in that noble elevation of thought, and in that pride of national glory which makes them fear nothing so much as disgrace to the name they bear?

The change, however, cannot be so great as is represented, and most assuredly it is not such as to injure the military character of our countrymen. It has not been customary for the chief and the subordinate officers to lead out the clan according to the old practice; since Highland regiments were first raised for the service of the state, it has been usual for some one, having the countenance of the chief and the confidence of the clan, to command them. Thus much, however, was absolutely necessary; it is still necessary; and will continue to be so, till the present manners are entirely changed, and the recollection of former events entire-

ly obliterated. Let any person unconnected with the Highlands endeavour to recruit soldiers in that country as he would do at Glasgow or Paisley ; and his want of success will most completely justify the remark, that the Highlanders are still so unlike the rest of our countrymen, and still retain so much of those habits which produced their most heroic achievements, that they will only engage to fight under native officers connected with their chiefs. In no other way can they think it possible that they should earn the laurels they conceive to be attached for ever, by a kind of imprescriptible right, to the Highland name.

It will probably be found upon examination that there is room for supporting the greatest part of the present population in agricultural industry, the best mode of forming a brave and hardy peasantry. But even were a very great proportion to find their way into a fishing village or manufactory, it would require many generations before the glory and gallantry of their ancestors would be forgotten, or the eager desire to imitate their

deeds be extinguished. No set of men on earth have such a strong passion for national glory, preserved under almost every circumstance of distance, climate, and occupation; and the predeliction they uniformly show to Highland regiments and Highland officers, prove that the present race still furnish the same source of national defence and triumph which is allowed to have been once the glory of the Highlander. They must indeed undergo a very great change when their habits and feelings do not peculiarly fit them for forming the military establishment of the country. Sobriety, obedience, ardour, patience of fatigue, are qualities eminently useful in a soldier, and eminently possessed by our countrymen. Inured to hardships from their earliest years, possessed of activity and courage which brave difficulty, and know no fear, they form a part of our bulwarks the best fitted for the defence of the state. This opinion is justified by the experience of every war in which we have been engaged, since the immortal Chatham called upon the High-

landers to fight the battles of their country, whether we look to the fields of Germany, the wilds of America, the plains of Hindoostan, or the sands of Egypt. Yet the regiments which there distinguished themselves were not raised till the vigour of the feudal system was at an end. At a time when it has been necessary to encrease the bounty for recruiting our army beyond all former example, and when the demands of our navy are likely to embroil us with a powerful rival, does it become a real patriot to disparage the best source from which those difficulties can be obviated? Lord Selkirk ought to have looked well to the ranks of our army, to the situation of the British empire, and to the aspect of Europe, before he attempted to diminish the public reliance upon this resource; or hazarded opinions of which every avaricious speculator will eagerly avail himself, who, while he is inflicting one of the severest wounds upon his country, will claim the applause of having performed an acceptable service to the state, and assume the privilege of

heaping abuse upon every person who conscientiously opposes his pernicious schemes.

It is very true, that it is not now so easy as it formerly was, to raise a regiment in the Highlands ; but this surely does not betray any unfitness or unwillingness in the inhabitants to undertake a military life. Neither can any one in the least degree acquainted with recent events, ascribe it with justice to the change of management. No doubt this last has its effect in the depopulated districts ; but it is well known that the main obstacle in general has been (and it has required strong influence and strong inducements to get the better of it) the fear, whether justified or not, that they will be draughted into other regiments, and lose the glory of the national character by serving along with comrades, and under officers, who are not Highlanders. Their fear of being considered in the same light and upon the same footing as other regiments, has been able to check feelings the most congenial to their hearts. From this cause, much more than from any

change of system which has yet taken place, is to be ascribed the hesitation which has been sometimes found among the Highlanders to obey the call of their country. Experience, they have thought, teaches them that their chieftains and officers are not sufficiently powerful to protect them from what they conceive to be an unjust invasion of their rights. Their very unwillingness proceeds from a strong and seemingly indelible character which has ever distinguished them, and which will probably endure as long as the political independence of our empire.

The motives and conduct of the author himself give a sufficient earnest, that the spirit of the Highlanders, which lays the foundation of the great and generous features in their character, will not soon be effaced. It is acknowledged to have been one of the objects of all his perilous undertakings to preserve, even on the other side of the Atlantic, the same temper of mind which distinguishes them in their native country. The associations from external objects, the impressions

from sympathy of feeling, lay the foundation of a national character: Lord Selkirk, however, seems satisfied that when these ties are broken,—when clanship is dissolved and chieftainship is forgotten,—when their country itself, and the deeds of their fathers live alike to them only in the tale of other times, the same character may still be exerted upon a different field of action. If so, how much more naturally must it exist among scenes which recal every warlike impression to the mind, and among those kinsmen who can still point to the rude memorials of former times; although their occupation no longer be the indolent amusements of the shepherd state, but the adventurous conflicts of the ocean, or the animating pursuits of the industrious village.

VI. Our attention is now called to a position which, at first sight, we should most certainly not expect to find seriously maintained—that instead of emigration being prejudicial to the public interest, ‘ the effect on the commercial

‘ prosperity of the kingdom is directly the
 ‘ reverse. To give a just view of the subject,
 ‘ the great change that has been described in
 ‘ the general management of the Highlands
 ‘ must be considered as one connected event.
 ‘ Emigration is a part of the change : it is
 ‘ one result ; and cannot, in fair reasoning,
 ‘ be abstracted from the other concomitant
 ‘ effects. If the national prosperity is es-
 ‘ sentially promoted by the causes from
 ‘ which emigration ensues, this effect cannot
 ‘ be considered as pernicious *.’ It is not
 possible to yield assent to this reasoning to
 the length to which it is carried : it decides
 the question without meeting it. It may
 no doubt be true, that the present system of
 management is more immediately profitable to
 the individual proprietors than the former was,
 and that it is therefore more productive of na-
 tional wealth. But the object of enquiry still
 remains ; Would not the advantage ultimately
 be tenfold greater, if means could be devised
 to prevent emigration taking effect as a con-

* P. 75.

sequence of the new system of management ? How much greater would the improvement be, to turn the whole land to its most profitable use, and to bring a market into the heart of every Highland property by the establishment of some branch of productive industry, which would afford employment to the people, and wealth to the proprietor ? If emigration be a necessary and unavoidable precursor of national improvement, we must submit without a sigh to the miserable spectacle of depopulated fields and dreary wastes : but if these be not naturally concomitant, but, on the contrary, hostile to each other, let us not lose the advantage of our population by being satisfied with the acquisition we have already made to our national wealth ; but let us strain every nerve to make the acquisition still greater, and to avail ourselves of whatever the liberality of nature has placed within our reach. She has given us arable plains ; let them be cultivated : and let our mountains be stocked with the produce best fitted for them : let the raw materials, the produce of our fields, be exported

under all the advantages of manufacturing industry. Let the people who are idle for want of employment be thus employed. If, after this, we have any unemployed people desirous of emigrating, let them by all means leave us : Such could only be a burden to the country.

If such were the system adopted, and if the change of management were gradually introduced, not only all emigration to a foreign country would discontinue, but there could not then exist the most distant excuse for transferring ‘ the seat of population from the remote ‘ villages in the Highlands to the towns ‘ and villages of the South *.’ For surely this could not be an advantageous change for the state, even although it should take place ‘ without any absolute difference of ‘ numbers.’ Will the towns and villages of the south produce the same hardy and intrepid race of mountaineers that have so often made our enemies tremble? Is there not some danger that the people would, in a certain degree, change their manners and habits with their place of

* P. 78.

residence ? At all events such a removal is attended with much distress, and many affecting circumstances, in breaking asunder the strongest natural instincts, which bind us to our kindred and the scenes of our early enjoyments : and the country perhaps might lose some who may have a dislike to settle in, what is to them, a land of strangers. Neither can it, in other points of view, be for the safety or advancement of the state, that a part should be turned into a desert, and the whole population concentrated into one spot. The improvement of no country whatever was ever effected in this way. The advantages resulting to the cultivation of the soil from the vicinity of towns and villages are well known ; but, for many obvious reasons, their influence extends only a few miles. It is of importance, then, that this beneficial influence should be as widely diffused as possible, and nothing can do so, but the multiplication of towns and villages in all different parts of the country. It gives to all the same advantages, instead of creating a monopoly in favour

of one or of a few districts : and, by more generally diffusing incitements to industry, really increases the productive industry of the nation. Bulky articles, too, thus find a market, when perhaps they would not bear the expence of distant carriage ; or, being manufactured on the spot into a much more valuable and more portable commodity, they will find their way to a distant market, at a cheaper rate to the public, but with a much more profitable return to the district of production.

Were the whole manufacturing capital and population collected into one or two spots, wages must rise in proportion to the difficulty of providing great towns with all the necessaries and luxuries of life ; the expence of carriage from a distance necessarily adding one to other reasons for their advanced price. This consequently must, in some degree, increase the price of the manufactures, which is always attended with this consequence, that it lessens the demand for them, by putting them beyond the reach of many

who would otherwise become purchasers. The wages in our manufacturing towns are often at so high a rate, that the manufacturer can afford to spend a great part of his time in idleness and dissipation ; the profits of his labour for a part of the week being amply sufficient for his support during the whole of it. Part of these wages, too, he expends upon what the manufacturer may consider as a necessary of life, but which certainly adds neither to the strength nor health of the individual.

Some years ago, several inhabitants of the Orkneys came to the manufacturing towns in the low country, where they got employment. But they soon had the sagacity to discover, that they could perform the same quantity of work equally well at home, at a much more profitable rate to themselves, as provisions were so much cheaper there. They did so accordingly. Now, instead of the high wages in the south, occasioned in part by the consumption of such an expensive article of food as butcher's meat, the manufacturer in

the Highlands would give additional encouragement to tillage by the use of the vegetable productions of the earth, as well as additional scope for the industry of the country by furnishing its manufactures at a cheaper rate. One acre raising grain is found to be much more productive of food, than one employed in rearing and fattening cattle. It has been computed, that, for every meal of butcher's meat produced by one fertile acre consumed by cattle or sheep in pasture, $12\frac{1}{2}$ would be produced, if such acre were occupied by corn crops; and $77\frac{1}{2}$, if it were occupied by potatoes. The advantages derivable from the last crop, are thus immense: to it, under all its disadvantages, Ireland is very much indebted for its present prosperous state. The climate and soil of the Highlands seem to be universally favourable to its production, and it is by degrees, becoming the principle food of the common people, who are beginning to appreciate its inestimable value.

This glaring circumstance, that, from the wages he receives, the manufacturer can af-

ford to be idle for whole days, shews, in the most distinct manner, that, owing to the prodigious increase of our manufactures, there is a competition for workmen, who do not flock to the manufacturing districts quickly enough to allow wages to assume their proper level. 'The floodgates should therefore be opened, and the population of the Highlands should be more generally introduced into such occupations. There is a demand for labour ; and every obstacle should be removed which prevents it being satisfied. There is no doubt that as the people have hitherto eagerly embraced this source of employment, they will continue to do so.

Upon the whole, then, looking solely to the profit of the manufacturer, it is not politic that the population should desert a cheap country, where the mode of living is sober, and the manners simple, for a large crowded and dissolute town, where the reverse of all this is the case. As to the state itself, the advantage of retaining the people, and of profiting by the market thus created, needs not be dwelt

upon. Nor is it just to the individual proprietors, that, to the other disadvantages connected with remoteness of situation, the loss of this artificial spur to industry and improvement should be added. Nothing should be done to produce this unnatural order of things. The state ought never to be unjust; and there is no fear that the Highland proprietors will be unjust to themselves.

This diminution of tillage in the Highlands, in consequence of the prevalence of the sheep-farming system, Lord Selkirk remarks, ‘ will probably be followed by an increase in ‘ the southern parts of the kingdom. It is ‘ well known that in England a great deal of ‘ arable land is kept in grass for rearing ‘ young cattle and sheep; but there will be ‘ the less necessity for this when the mountains furnish a greater supply*.’ Such a conclusion, perhaps, it was thought, would make these speculations popular every where beyond the Highlands. But there has, in reality, been no diminution of tillage upon

* P. 79.

the whole; and the produce of the richest land, it is believed, is greater and more certain in pasture than in tillage; which, along with some political reasons, accounts for the predilection in England for the first-mentioned mode of occupying land. But be this as it may, most assuredly it is unnecessary to depopulate one part of the kingdom to induce the inhabitants of another part to attend more to tillage and less to pasturage; or rather still more to encrease the quantity of ground under tillage without diminishing its present quantity of pasturage, for it is a well known fact, that Great Britain does not raise grain sufficient for the maintainance of its inhabitants. The high price at which a necessary of life must arrive, when supplied by importation, is the best encouragement for its production; and England has no occasion, for her own advancement, to diminish the quantity of tillage, and consequently the population of Scotland, while she requires foreign supplies of grain for herself. While tillage is constantly attended with a demand for labour, and conse-

quently with an encrease of population, pasturage just as regularly produces the opposite effect; and while this last gives encouragement to very few handicraft-trades, and still fewer manufactures, tillage may be said to be the parent of arts and manufactures, which, in regular progression, never fail to be accompanied by commerce. So that even though its produce should not be so great as in fact it is, the advantages which attend it are such, that they should never be abandoned unless the profits of pasturage greatly exceed what are derived from tillage.

While, however, it is maintained, that, upon the whole, the present system is not unfavourable to population, its destructive effects cannot be altogether concealed; for this great and important truth appears where we should most certainly least expect to find it, ‘ that, in some districts, the more secluded vallies, lying in the midst of high mountains, retains scarcely any inhabitants;’ altho’, it is immediately added, that ‘ numbers are every where found along the larger vales and near the arms of the sea, by which the

‘ country is so much intersected ; hence
 ‘ there are, in *almost* every part of the High-
 ‘ lands, more of the inferior class of people
 ‘ than enough to carry on all the work that
 ‘ is to be done *.’ The admission that in
 some districts there are not enough of people
 to manage the few agricultural operations
 which this favourite system has left to be per-
 formed, is most material in the present inquir-
 ry ; as it shews that it is not always from ne-
 cessity nor from present want that the emigra-
 tions from such districts have taken place, and
 points out pretty strongly the justice of a re-
 mark that has been made upon the emigrations
 which took place in 1802, that, ‘ not deny-
 ‘ ing that some have no alternative but emi-
 ‘ gration, by far the greater number emigrate
 ‘ from the prevalence of passion or caprice†.’
 This conclusion is very strongly corroborated
 by a circumstance mentioned by the same
 author, who is uniformly quoted with re-
 spect by Lord Selkirk, for every thing de-
 pending upon the accuracy of local informa-
 tion, although the conclusion drawn by each

* P. 86.

† Irvine on Emigration, p. 2.

be very opposite indeed. ‘ In some districts
 ‘ day labourers are become scarce ; in others,
 ‘ they can hardly be got for any price :
 ‘ hence, their wages have encreased fourfold
 ‘ within the last twelve years.*’ Such never
 could be the consequence of a superabundant
 population thinning itself so as to meet the just
 demand for labour. It is indeed notorious,
 that throughout some parts of the Highlands,
 the price of labour at present is higher than in
 the Lowlands, owing to the competition that
 arises from the diminished number of labour-
 ers. The neighbourhood of Lochfyne may be
 mentioned as an instance of this. Great in-
 deed must be the desire of improvement, if,
 under these very weighty disadvantages, any
 such attempts are made ; but what would have
 been the progress, how much capital would
 have been added to the state, and how much
 employment provided for industry, had not
 the too rapid adoption of sheep-farming ex-
 pelled the means of those improvements ? It
 must be long indeed before, in such districts,

* Irvine, P. 80.

this diminution of numbers can be supplied from the natural encrease of the inhabitants.

As the Noble Author is probably aware that the fact cannot be concealed, and that even his own statement betrays the melancholy truth, that population must be diminished by the introduction of sheep-farming; it is maintained, that a very great increase of productive industry, among those who remain, will more than counterbalance this loss. ‘Where
 ‘ the old system of management is broken up,
 ‘ the utmost that can be supposed, with any
 ‘ probability, is, that from an estate inhabited by 100 families, 25 or perhaps 30, may
 ‘ have the means of emigrating: and does
 ‘ any one, acquainted with the Highlanders,
 ‘ entertain a doubt, that 70 or 75 well employed labourers will perform work of
 ‘ more value than 100 small tenants and cotters? It would perhaps be nearer the truth
 ‘ to say, they will do three or four times as
 ‘ much*.’ This last supposition is quite extravagant; and the small number who are

* P. 81.



supposed to emigrate, is quite inconsistent with those principles which lead to the conclusion so often expressed, that a few shepherds and their dogs will be sufficient for a large extent of country, and that the whole race of tenants must be drained off. But take his positions for granted, how does the population which remains become at once so singularly industrious and expert? It can only be, because sufficient employment and sufficient encouragement are held out for the exercise of their habits of industry. It can proceed from no other cause. By the removal of the emigrants, those that remain undergo no metamorphosis; their latent energies only are called forth. Would not the same effect be produced, if the same cause existed, although no emigration took place? It most assuredly would, and all the misery of emigration, and all this waste of labour would be saved. If in Prince Edward's Island, Lord Selkirk had found that 75 men could do the same work which it had been supposed would require 100 to perform, Would he proceed in-

stantly to banish the 25 who appear to be supernumeraries upon the ground now in cultivation? His Lordship is too well acquainted with the means of rendering America populous and productive to commit such a gross error in political science. He would employ them in clearing new ground, or in draining swamps, or in improving natural pasture. The very same rule must be adopted in this country. A waste of labour, in every department of agriculture, is not peculiar to the Highlands. As an instance of what other parts of the island exhibit, it may be mentioned, that in Berkshire, 4000 horses (one-third of the whole) are needlessly employed in cultivating the ground. These consume grain equal to the bread required for the subsistence of 5000 souls*. If labour were judiciously managed throughout the Island of Great Britain, there can be little doubt but that it might again make grain an article of export. There is no subject upon which splendid talents could be more benefi-

* Agric. Surv. of Berks. p. 46.

cially employed than this. After such defects are cured in other parts of the country, Lord Selkirk may proceed to thin the population of the Highlands, if it shall be then thought necessary.

It is remarked, ‘ If the gentlemen of the
 ‘ Highlands are determined, at all events, to
 ‘ preserve the population of their estates, it
 ‘ is unquestionably in their power, by re-
 ‘ placing their farms on their old footing, and
 ‘ relinquishing their advance of rent. If they
 ‘ do not chuse to make this pecuniary sacri-
 ‘ fice, they must abide by the consequences;
 ‘ and it is with a bad grace they come to the
 ‘ Legislature for the means of obviating
 ‘ them *.’ But while such a mode of ma-
 nagement would not be advantageous to the
 individual, it would be just as little advantage-
 ous to the state. Under the old system, the
 produce of the ground was almost entirely
 consumed by its indolent inhabitants, and the
 rent was comparatively of trifling amount.
 The value of the whole Highlands was only

* P. 89.

the supply of some cattle and wool, instead of that source of wealth to the empire which experience has shown that it may really be. While the military retainers were useful to the chieftain, very little other rent than their personal service was required. But now that civilization and laws have destroyed this engine of power and importance, the interest of the landholders goes hand in hand with the peace and prosperity of the country. The land is now made to yield a much greater produce with a diminished expence of labour. If, then, it should be possible, as it clearly is not, to bring back the emigrants, and replace them on the footing they formerly were, it would be impolitic and unjust to do so. The old system could be advantageous to the state only in the view of providing a nursery for our army and navy; and although it might, with some degree of plausibility, be urged, that laying out of view every personal consideration connected with the peculiar manners of the Highlanders, and the composition of their society, the indus-

trious habits of the country would be less deranged, if, upon the breaking out of a war, they were always ready to fill the ranks of the army, leaving our manufacturers to the quiet prosecution of their various occupations, this would be imposing a heavy tax upon the Highland proprietors. They would thus be at the sole expence of providing for the national defence. Would they not, in such a case, be entitled to claim from the nation some recompence for a privation submitted to for the general good? This is not, however, a system which can or ever ought to be adopted; sound policy forbids it; it would in fact put the nation to the expence of a war establishment in time of peace: and Lord Selkirk surely cannot be serious when he says, it is the only alternative for those who wish to retain the population of their estates. Neither need any well-wisher of his country fear that the Highland proprietors, if they should not chuse to adopt this only alternative which is held out to them, will, from inattention to their people's true interests, abandon them to Ameri-

can colonizers. They know well that the circumstances of the country, and the disposition of its inhabitants, point out much more generous and enlightened plans, which, it is hoped, will the more steadily be pursued from discussions, the only effect of which will be to make the subject more and more understood.

If, indeed, Lord Selkirk could persuade the public; that the fact regarding the depopulation of the Highlands ‘in reality amounts to this, that the produce of the country, instead of being consumed by a set of intrepid but indolent military retainers, is applied to the support of peaceable and industrious manufacturers*,’ then might he claim some merit from having freed society of these useless, or rather burdensome members. But no one, who opposes Lord Selkirk’s plans, wishes to bring back the customs or the indolence of former times. It is mistating the question in dispute to say so. What we maintain is, that in this country

the Highlander will exert his industry with the same vigour he is said to do amidst the woods of America ; that he only wants proper incitements and proper opportunities for doing so ; and that these are every where to be met with in the Highlands with an abundance which the present population will be unable fully to exhaust. In this way a greater demand will be created for the labour of the manufacturer, and a greater supply of necessaries will be sent to him to feed his wants ; at the same time that the state will acquire additional strength from the numbers she maintains, and assume a more imposing aspect amidst the political convulsions of the times.

The Highland proprietors most certainly need not be ashamed to demand the assistance of the Legislature to ensure the success of their efforts for obviating the necessity of emigration. Not indeed by any restrictive regulations ; but by assisting them in providing employment for the people at home. For, as already remarked, it is very much owing

to the right of conquest exercised by government, that this rage for emigration has arisen. The change of manners was violently introduced, before the immediate means of absorbing the displaced or discontented population into other occupations could be provided. But, independently altogether of this claim of right which the Highland proprietors have upon government, surely the interest of the nation at large demands that the capital and industry of the country shall never be forced to abandon her, unless it shall politically conduce to her advantage. That it cannot possibly do so, as long as an acre remains uncultivated, is too obvious to need illustration. If any unjust prohibition or impolitic discouragement stands in the way of the free course of national industry, it is the duty of government instantly to remove the obstacle, and to repair the loss which it may have occasioned.

VII. 'Every friend to his country,' says Lord Selkirk, 'would rejoice if they (the

Highland proprietors) ‘ could find the means
 ‘ of obviating the local depopulation of their
 ‘ district, by the introduction of suitable
 ‘ branches of productive industry *.’

Such a correct view of the advantages resulting to the country from this very effectual mode of preventing the necessity of emigration, it is pleasing to find followed up by these observations: ‘ Among these the
 ‘ most promising is the cultivation of waste
 ‘ land. Some attempts have been made in
 ‘ the Highlands to turn the superfluous population to this branch of industry. The
 ‘ success with which they have been attended is sufficient to encourage further experiments.’ Some of the obstacles which obstruct the complete success of this measure, such as short leases, and the little encouragement which it is said has hitherto been given by the proprietors, are then pointed out: this conclusion, however, is drawn from the whole, ‘ that there is no probability that this

‘ resource can have any effect in diminishing
 ‘ the emigrations. It is only to the poorest
 ‘ of the people that this can be rendered ac-
 ‘ ceptable; by the tenants even of the lowest
 ‘ order, it would be considered as too great
 ‘ a degradation *.’

This subject is so very important that it demands a more minute discussion than has been bestowed upon it. If, where-
 ever it has hitherto been tried, it has been successful, as it is admitted to have been under every disadvantage, it will be difficult to conjecture to what extent it would succeed, if the most judicious plans were adopted. Even although it should be true, that its success is confined to the poorer class of people, this of itself would be singularly advantageous to the state. But if it shall be found that there is really nothing which can confine these benefits to the poorer sort, but that they are greedily sought after by the whole class of small tenants, the importance of this sort of employment must

* P. 96.

be at once obvious. As it will immediately appear that such really is the case, we cannot help thinking that Lord Selkirk's well known talents in rural and political economy would have been more usefully and honourably employed, in illustrating proper systems of improvement for the Highlands, than in the speculations his eloquence has illustrated, and the plan he has so much exerted himself to recommend.

It is frequently insinuated by Lord Selkirk, in the course of his observations, that the most beneficial use to which the district of the Highlands can be applied, is to be the breeding country of the united kingdom, as being throughout more fitted for pasturage than for raising grain. Like most other general observations, this can by no means be admitted to be in all respects correct. In many very remote districts, sufficient grain is raised for the consumption of the whole inhabitants, and even from some of the western isles grain is an article of export. There is no doubt that the Highlands could raise enough of grain for the support of a greater number of inhabi-

tants than are at present maintained in it. The remark of Lord Selkirk, it is very true, applies more justly to some parts of the western coast, where the climate is so wet and stormy that in some years the crop of grain cannot be secured, although even in this district, 'wherever grain is cultivated, it is extremely productive *;' and it is well known that every species of green crop is there raised with great success.

It may very possibly be thought that the encreasing adoption of the sheep-farming system, is a sufficient proof that it has been found to be the most profitable mode of rural management. But this cannot be considered as by any means an accurate criterion. It has not yet been tried, for a sufficient length of time, to ascertain accurately its advantages, compared with other modes. It is unquestionably much more profitable than the old system, and requires much less advance of money on the part of the

* Survey of the North Counties, p. 118.

landlord. This is all that can yet be said of it ; but this of itself is quite enough to procure it very universal adoption. Had the same attention been employed in improving the breed of cattle in many of those districts which have reaped the benefit of the care bestowed upon sheep-farming, and had proper winter food been raised upon the arable land for them, there cannot be a doubt that the value of such a farm would have been superior to what is now obtained, and without any of the evils of depopulation. There are many situations much better adapted to rear black cattle than sheep ; and it may be said of the whole Highlands, that they are equally adapted for either, except upon the sides of some of the steepest, or the tops of some of the highest of the ranges of mountains ; and wherever it is possible to rear cattle, they are much more advantageous to the grazier than sheep, whose greatest property is to feed in those places which cattle cannot reach. Besides, although the price of sheep continues high, from the vast quanti-

tics required for stocking the country, and the tenant is thus enabled to pay a good rent, the immense increase in the quantity of this stock will certainly greatly diminish the price of the produce. Before a great proportion of the Highlands can be fully stocked, the market will be glutted—a sale must be forced—consequently the price diminished. This seems even already in some measure to have taken place, as the price of lambs has fallen considerably at the latest markets in the Highlands, not so many being now required for new stocks. In all probability the country will be obliged again to return to the corn and cattle system, wherever such a system is advantageous. This is the more likely, if the quantity of cattle reared be diminished from their place being occupied by sheep; for, in that case, the value of the black cattle stock must rise in proportion, till a much greater profit be derived from it than from sheep. But how difficult will the return be to the corn and cattle system? No more inhabitants will have been re-

tained than could attend to the great sheep walk, which is to embrace the principal part of the Highlands; the increased demand for labourers will greatly and disproportionately increase the price of labour, so as completely to discourage any change of system; and the slowness with which this demand can be supplied by a population increasing from natural means, will powerfully retard the progress of improvement. It is not at all likely that, in such a state of things, any strangers would migrate to the Highlands. To a person not a native, it does not present any very alluring objects: so that while we conclude, with an intelligent observer, that ‘the joint productions of corn, cattle, and sheep, appear most likely to give permanency and certainty to the prosperity of the country*’, we must also agree with him, that the proper time for adopting this system, is ‘while there are people in the Highlands†’ sufficient for these purposes. The same author

* Survey of Centr. Highl. p. 56.

† P. 52.

' declares, that the argument which has been
 ' held about whether the Highlands should be
 ' inhabited by the human species or by sheep,
 ' can have no sufficient ground until the coun-
 ' try be rendered fully productive, and fit for
 ' the support of either. At present it may be
 ' said to be in a state of wildness not unsimilar
 ' to that of the wilds of America.' The pos-
 sibility and advantage of retrieving it from
 this state must place in a most striking point
 of view, the impolicy of emigration. The
 greatest efforts of human industry have been
 made from the influence of necessity ; and no
 country will ever be made to maintain near-
 ly the population its physical powers give it
 a capacity of doing, if its inhabitants leave it
 whenever they find land in some other re-
 gion more productive or more easily culti-
 vated.

Some circumstances seemingly very obvious
 must have been overlooked by Lord Sel-
 kirk, otherwise the idea could never have been
 for one moment entertained, that emigra-
 tion was necessary, far less that it could

have a beneficial influence upon the political interests of the country.

That agriculture is yet in its infancy, is a remark which cannot be confined to the district of the Highlands: nor is that part of the British empire singular in yielding a very inferior produce compared with its power of raising vegetable food. Great Britain, by the most accurate computation *, contains 67,000,000 acres. Of these 7,000,000 are supposed to be occupied by houses, roads, lakes, rivers, and other objects which render them incapable of cultivation. Of the remaining 60,000,000, only five are employed in raising grain, and twenty-five in pasturage; while thirty millions lie waste, or are cultivated in such a manner as to be extremely unproductive. Within the last fifty years, however, much has been done to reclaim these wastes: no less than 2,800,000 acres have been improved and inclosed †; and it

* Sir John Sinclair's.

† M^r Arthur's Pol. and Fin. Facts, c. 13.

has been calculated that if a third of the waste lands had been brought into a proper state of cultivation, they would have afforded maintenance for double the population that the island at present contains. Had we been able to oppose a population of twenty-two millions to the towering ambition of France, how much less reason should we have had to dread the event of the present contest?

It will not be thought surprising, after the details which have been given of the former state of the Highlands, that they should be found to contain at least an equal proportion of waste lands with any other part of the kingdom. Those, however, who are best acquainted with the rural economy of the districts of the country where these are situated, point them out as highly improveable, and as affording a valuable and important addition to our national wealth. Every page of the Agricultural Surveys of the Highland counties, as well as of the more minute details of the Statistical Accounts of the High-

land parishes, place this subject in a most conspicuous point of view. Indeed it is impossible for any person to travel through the Highlands without remarking, that the same spirit of agricultural improvement, which so remarkably distinguishes the rest of Scotland, is making rapid, though late, advances into every part of this hitherto neglected district: and when we compare even its present with its former state, we cannot but wonder at the prodigious quantity of waste ground which every year sees added to the productive resources of the country. It is not alone in the wild district of Rannoch, that the following is a true picture. Every corner of the country can furnish similar instances. ‘In my neighbourhood, there are fields, which, in their natural unimproved state, were scarcely worth any thing, but which will now set at 2l. or 3l. an acre. A field of from four to six acres yields a crop of hay which sells for 30l. or 40l. I have seen those fields mere black moss, or rocks, stones, or brushwood, like inaccessible

‘jungles of India or America*.’ Political circumstances are now permitting the country to enjoy the benefit of such improvements; so that the present moment seems least of any fitted for insisting upon the inhabitants quitting their native country to find employment amidst the pestilential swamps of America.

It is impossible, in a sketch like this, to enter minutely into the subject; nor to discuss the capacities of different parts of the Highlands for employing the population in this branch of industry: But the following account of one district may serve as a specimen of all the rest: ‘In this county (Argyle) there is a vast quantity of waste land, which is capable of cultivation. Much of this land, if improved, would be of more value than a great part of what we have now in tillage. Our forefathers, ignorant of the art or advantage of draining, pitched not upon the best, but upon the driest fields. If the plain was too wet to admit the plough,

* Irvine, p. 116.

' they passed by it, and tore up the face of a
 ' bleak and barren hill, where there was nei-
 ' ther soil nor shelter. Hence a great deal
 ' of our best soil remains in a state of nature.
 ' The quantity of waste land capable of culti-
 ' vation, that may be in the continental part
 ' of the county, may probably, at a low cal-
 ' culation, be stated at an average at 2000
 ' acres to each parish, or about 50,000 in
 ' all*.' This most unquestionably exhibits
 the country in a very different point of view
 from that in which it has been placed by
 Lord Selkirk. The Rev. Author was called
 upon to exhibit a faithful narrative of what
 he had the best means of knowing; while
 the opposite representation is essential to the
 speculations of any one whose interest it is
 that America should be supposed the only field
 for the industry of the Highlander. Nume-
 rous extracts might be produced in support
 of the opinions of Dr Smith; but, on the
 present occasion, one other quotation only

* Surv. of Argyle by Rev. Dr J. Smith, p. 171.


shall be offered. It will be the more readily forgiven, as it contains the opinion of one without any national partiality to bias his judgment, and with too intimate a knowledge of the subject to suffer any deception to mislead him. ‘ The central Highlands do not produce a sufficient supply of vegetable food for their numerous inhabitants. Meal is every year, I believe, brought into it, and some years in considerable quantities: and this, notwithstanding the country, if fully reclaimed and properly cultivated, would, I am of opinion, produce more than enough for the present, or a greater number of inhabitants*.’ Will any one doubt that it is better to employ the present inhabitants in reclaiming the country, and raising vegetable food for the present, and even an increased population, than to drive them out of it from a supposed want of sources of productive industry for employing them?

In the cultivation of waste land, it may be affirmed without fear of contradiction, that

* Survey of Centr. Highl. p. 21.



the whole amount of the people, who must be displaced by the prevalence of sheep-farming, where judiciously pursued, might be usefully employed very much to the advantage of the state, as well as to their own individual comfort. The capital which goes out of the country to cultivate the wilds of America, would just serve the same purpose here, saving, at the same time, to the cultivators the expence of the voyage. Give them leases sufficient to secure a proper reward for their labour, and there is no fear of their becoming any longer bondsmen to American Colonizers: Nor has it been found that many of those, who have sufficient property to purchase lands for themselves, insist upon carrying themselves and their families to a foreign country, if they can embark their little fortune in similar adventures on this side of the Atlantic. A few, no doubt, may have done so; but they are not numerous. These exceptions, however, cannot affect the general argument: find employment, upon the extensive wastes which every where



desolate the country, and by far the greatest proportion of the present inhabitants will eagerly grasp at it. The cultivation of waste land obtained through these means, in fact, adds to the territory of the state; and, by doing so, at the same time increases its resources and population. For while so much ground, capable of cultivation, remains in a state yielding little or nothing, the country is just as little benefited by it as if it did not exist. But if reclaimed, which the present population affords in a great measure the means of doing, it supplies much more effectually to the state, although perhaps not to certain individuals, all the advantages which can possibly be expected to result from the most flourishing condition of our foreign colonies.


Nature, indeed, has for this purpose been bountiful in her favours, as perhaps no country contains a greater variety or a greater quantity of those natural stimuli which add fresh vigour to the soil, and repair the waste produced by frequent cropping. We possess mar-



ble, limestone, marle, sea shells, and sea-weed, or ware as it is called, almost every where, and in great abundance, both in the interior of the country and along the sea shore; we have rills of water every where flowing for the profitable uses of irrigation; and we may also add, although it may provoke a smile, that we have an inexhaustible supply of peat moss, the effects of which, as a valuable manure, are becoming generally known and acknowledged. It is indeed a most important acquisition to agricultural science.

Of such advantages we are beginning to avail ourselves. Already a very material improvement has been made in the rural oeconomy of the Highlands, by what may be termed the system of *crofting*. By it every different variety of ground upon a Highland estate is turned to its proper use, and every person employed to the best advantage. All the arable grounds in the bottom of the vallies, on the sides of the hills, on the banks of rivers, and the margins of lochs, are laid out in small farms, consisting of from ten to twenty acres, or perhaps more. Upon each of these

lots one family is set down, each of which enjoys all the benefit of its own industry ; sometimes each has also a portion of grazing ground. These possessions are separated from each other by proper fences, as well as by an enclosure from the farms which comprehend the interior and mountainous part of the estate, upon which in former times perhaps only a few deer wandered, but which is now occupied either by black cattle or sheep, according as it is adapted to one or the other species of stock. In this way the proprietor has a prospect of seeing a great addition made to the cultivated parts of his property, without any expence on his part ; and will in a few years obtain a rent perhaps six times as high as a sheep farm would have produced. The whole population on the estate is accommodated with certain portions of land, according to their skill, industry, and capital, so that individual interest and public prosperity go hand in hand. The Duke of Argyle has prosecuted this system for many years to a very great extent, as well as Lord Breadalbane ; and with a little encouragement the



tenants have by their labour made improvements by enclosing, draining, &c. to an astonishing amount. They are not only compleatly contented but thriving; they have exerted themselves beyond the most sanguine hopes of their landlords. Lord Selkirk perhaps knows, that all the attempts to persuade them in 1803, that their lot would be happier in America, proved fruitless. The same system has been followed with the same success upon the estates of Ardgower, of Locheil, and of Clanranald, as well as in North Uist and the island of Ulva; and it has been accomplished still more lately by the Duke of Gordon in Lochaber. After accommodating all the inhabitants on his property, and many from the neighbourhood, still this was not sufficient to occupy the whole ground fit for *crofting*; and accordingly it was found necessary to advertise for settlers from other parts of the country. — So much is the merit of this system now acknowledged, that a plan has been given, within these few weeks, of the best mode of improving an estate in the island of Mull, which by universal consent is

believed to be as populous as any other estate in the Highlands ; and yet, according to the plan which has been submitted to the proprietor, nine new families are required before the whole farms and possessions can be occupied to the best advantage. In the same manner it has been found necessary to plant new tenants in the isle of Harries, in order most beneficially to improve the estate of its principal proprietor. Yet this is the country from which Lord Selkirk calls upon government to encourage an emigration of its peaceable and well disposed inhabitants ; and this the very time which he has chosen for making an appeal upon this subject to the public. In a few years more, these practical experiments would have been universally known, and rooted up the very basis of his reasonings.

This system has been of course attended with the annihilation of the tacksmen, as middle-men between the tenant and the proprietor, and with the abolition of the services and the exactions which former times



had sanctioned. Nor is this to be regretted. Their tenants were in general less comfortable than those of the laird; though this certainly may not have been universal: but, at all events, experience has always shewn, that such an order of men, between the owner of the ground and the occupier, is a political evil of very great magnitude, and that scarcely any thing can prove a greater bar to the tenant's success, than the claim^e which his master makes upon his time and labour. Neither have those tacksmen any reason to complain, as they in general have received a farm perhaps larger than they ever occupied before, the rest of their extensive possession having been subset. Some of them, however, have been discontented, and have led to America those over whom they had influence in this country; whose lot, it is feared, they have not always improved by the change.

The following account of an experiment, upon principles a little different from those already mentioned, will, it is hoped, not be

displeasing. A few years ago, a large estate was converted into a sheep pasture, and given in lease to a few rich graziers at an advanced rent. So much humanity, however, was shewn to some of the poor people, who could not provide for themselves elsewhere, that they were allowed one large farm among them, the rent of which was advanced, by degrees, to the general standard. There they sat down to the number of about 30 families, and, at a considerable expence, built for themselves tolerable habitations. The arable part of the farm, with as much ground as could be improved by cultivation, they divided into shares proportionate to their respective families. This being done, they set to work with plough, spade, and mattock, occasionally uniting their forces to perform what they could not singly accomplish. At the same time they joined the little money they possessed, with what they could raise upon credit, to put a common stock of sheep upon the mountain, and employed a common shepherd to look after them. Their flock prospered ; and their

ground, rendered fertile by their exertions, produced enough to supply the wants of nature, which are all a Highlander requires. From 100 to 150 souls not only derived their subsistence from the farm, but paid their rent, perhaps without any sensible diminution of the cattle it was capable of maintaining, if the plain had not been tilled*.

There are some things in this narrative well worthy of attention. While the interest of the landlord did not suffer, thirty families had the means of making themselves comfortable without the heart-rending pang of looking for comfort in America; and had the plan been steadily pursued, there cannot be a doubt that the proprietor would have profited much more than by the system of depopulation, which is so strongly recommended. The encouragement to industry effectually prevents idleness in the people; the less active being spurred on to emulate the example and earn the success of their more industrious neighbours; commu-

* Stat. Acct. of Scotl. Vol. X. p. 563.

nicating to each other the benefit of an experience which may have cost considerable hardships and expence, till all the arable parts of the farm, by their labour and industry, are brought into a course of cultivation the most productive. When the great bulk of the present occupiers have either died or been otherwise accommodated, the whole may be put into the hands of two or three of the most intelligent and industrious either of themselves or of their sons ; when the rent that will be drawn for it must be much higher than that for any of the mere pasture farms of the same size and quality. In the mean time, the proprietor ought gradually to introduce among them and their families some easy effort of domestic industry, assembling them into a village for that purpose ; or direct their attention to the prosecution of the fishery, if they be situated near the sea shore. By this means, the land will yield a rent which the consumption of towns and villages alone can justify, and will at the same time, among other singular advantages, find sufficient assistance from the inhabitants of these, dur-

ing the periodical seasons of agricultural exertion which require the labour of many more hands than are usually employed upon the farm. By such management as this, the hills might be covered with sheep, and the plains with grain; the Highland estates would be improved, while the people would be rendered happy.

It need not be dissembled, that throughout a very great part of the Highlands, the state of husbandry is just as bad as possible; the very same which was once universal throughout the whole of Scotland, and which prevailed even in some of the best cultivated districts of the low country, within the memory of the present generation. The soil is often cropt with successive white crops, till it can produce no longer; it is then allowed to rest for three or four years, without the precaution having been taken of sowing it down with grass seeds. The soil perhaps is just beginning to give a little tolerable grass, when it is again ploughed up, and, without the smallest particle of manure, its productive powers are once more exhausted

by repeated white crops. It is only upon a field or two near the farm-house that any manure is bestowed. It cannot surely be wondered at, if, under such a mode of management, the produce is very scanty indeed; and it is probably not assuming too much to say, that, under a proper system, the land would produce three times, or at least twice, the quantity of vegetable food it now affords. Where bad management is very much the cause of bad crops, the climate is too often introduced to bear a much greater share of the blame than is justly due to it. In most places, it forms no obstacle to the production of grain which skill and industry may not conquer. But although in some, the climate may not be so favourable for corn crops, both it and the soil have been uniformly found admirably adapted for raising all kinds of green crops. In the island of Sky, some experiments have been made in turnip husbandry, where the returns have been equal even to the produce of the low-land districts best adapted to that crop. The advantage of this mode of culture is great,

both as forming part of a proper rotation of crops, and as affording a large increase to the vegetable food of every animal reared in the country. The introduction of potatoes, tho' only partial, has already produced the most beneficial consequences. Many parishes, which used formerly to send away several hundred pounds annually for purchasing meal, now require no such foreign supply, from the attention which is paid to the cultivation of this valuable root. This has taken place without any diminution in their stock of cattle, merely from a more enlightened system of management. The sum which was formerly sent to a foreign country for the supply which their fields did not then afford, they can now employ in the most profitable of all ways, both for themselves and the state,—in the cultivation of their farms : this is an increase of capital expended upon the most lasting of all improvements. It accounts for the increased populousness of the country, upon the whole, within the last fifty years ; an increase, however, which has by no means kept pace with the advance

made by the rest of Scotland, and still less with that made by Ireland, where, from some late investigations, it appears, that during the same period, the population has doubled*. Besides the increase of productiveness from new crops, if attention were always paid to use only the earliest kinds of grain, there are very few seasons, indeed, which could prevent them from being brought to maturity.

For the purpose of making even the lands which are at present cultivated, properly productive, many agricultural improvements, not as yet known in the country, will be necessary : consequently employment will be found for a greater number of people than have hitherto sufficed for the operations of the farm, in draining, inclosing, watering, &c. In many parts of the Highlands this has already taken place ; more people being actually employed upon the same spot of

* Newenham's Inquiry into the Population of Ireland, Sect. 5.

ground than formerly. If the people be all at once drawn away, there is an end of such improvements.

We need not fear that the great advantages resulting from improved modes of management, in particular from the system of *crofting*, will be long overlooked. One cannot travel through the Highlands without being astonished at the exertions which are every where making; and, as Lord Selkirk says most truly, ‘there is much more reason to be surprised at the progress which has hitherto been made by the inhabitants in these sixty years, than that they should not have accomplished, to its full extent, the change which, in other parts, has been the work of many centuries.’ There is no reason, then, to accuse the country of any backwardness in availing itself of its various capacities for improvement. We find that a spirit of industry and exertion is every where gaining ground. Of a very extensive district, it is remarked (nor can the fact be said to be local) by one who knows it well, that, ‘above all other advantages, may be stated the cha-

‘racter and disposition of the people, roused
 ‘from their former lethargy, animated with a
 ‘prospect of gain, impressed with favourable
 ‘ideas of the benefits to be derived from in-
 ‘dustry and exertion, and satisfied that what
 ‘they earn will be their own *.’ This tes-
 timony, it is presumed, will be thought supe-
 rior to all idle theory or speculation on the
 subject.

Indeed, the present inhabitants of the
 Highlands are not a bit more wedded to old
 prejudices, or less alive to their own interests,
 than the rest of their countrymen. There
 will be no occasion to change the whole in-
 habitants for the purpose of stocking it with
 a race of people more congenial to the
 views of speculative improvers. The peo-
 ple may, indeed, have been hitherto more
 ignorant of any other system than that which
 they had always seen before their eyes sup-
 plying their wants; and they may be averse
 to adopt any untried mode of attaining an

* Surv. of North. Counties by Sir J. Sinclair, Intro-
 duction, p. 21.

object, where they have hitherto succeeded to the utmost of their wishes. Set them, however, a proper example, teach them its advantages, and shew them how to secure them, and they will not be long without adopting it. Take the following fact : ‘ Mr Traill (She-
 ‘ riff of Caithness) in order to introduce the
 ‘ practice of fallowing among his tenants, pre-
 ‘ vailed on one of them, about five years ago,
 ‘ to summer-fallow two acres, and he was to
 ‘ pay no rent for them that year, upon condi-
 ‘ tion of his laying them down with grass seeds
 ‘ next season, which he agreed to : and the
 ‘ result of the experiment was such, that not
 ‘ only the tenant, but many of the farmers of
 ‘ the neighbourhood, have adopted this sys-
 ‘ tem, and have found it greatly to their ad-
 ‘ vantage ; it is particularly necessary in a
 ‘ county, where hitherto so little attention
 ‘ has been paid by the common farmers to
 ‘ the extirpation of weeds*.’ A stronger
 proof than this, where the profit of the year

* Surv. of North. Count. p. 202.

seems to be abandoned, cannot be given of the eagerness of the people to adopt such improvements as experience shews them are real and substantial. Wherever complaints are made of attachment to old habits, and hostility to any innovation, it will probably be found that the experiment has not been made in such a manner as to satisfy the tenantry that it is really an improvement: for if the improvement be carried on at the expence of the landlord, and almost all improvements at first necessarily must be so, they are apt to look upon the increased produce as the price of a quantity of money and labour which will not be repaid. But whenever one of their own rank and condition is encouraged to undertake the improvement, every thriving and intelligent tenant instantly copies his mode of management.

But, independently of agricultural improvements upon arable land, the increasing perfection of the cattle and sheep system will require a far greater population than can at present be absorbed by it. The Highland

hills could maintain, during summer, a greater quantity of sheep and cattle than at present pasture there, provided winter and spring food could be provided for them in sufficient abundance. Now, if due attention were bestowed on draining and enclosing the low grounds and the sloping sides of the hills; if they were irrigated or sown with grass-seeds; and if these were occasionally ploughed up, cropped in due order with green crops, and laid down again in grass, the increased quantity of cattle, which might be maintained on the same quantity of ground, would be very great indeed. ‘ One acre of ‘ infield land, under proper management, will ‘ produce hay of as much value as that which ‘ is now collected from the meadows of a ‘ plough-gait *.’ The same intelligent observer mentions, that, ‘ in the spring of ‘ 1793, the sown grasses of the farm grounds ‘ of Taymouth would have fattened a bullock, ‘ while store cattle and sheep were starving

* Surv. of Centr. Highl. p. 42.

‘on the wild lands of the surrounding country*.’

These instances afford the strongest encouragement to adopt the same system which is now beginning to prevail in the sheep-counties in the lowlands, where a very considerable portion of ground, formerly devoted entirely to pasture, is now under a judicious system of cultivation, which is found to be most advantageous, even upon the favourite system of exclusive sheep-farming. This naturally occupies more people, and brings back the country by degrees to the state it once was in, so far as it regards its population. The course of improvement cannot fail in a certain, though perhaps distant period, to introduce the same system into the Highlands. If so, why should Lord Selkirk endeavour to prevent the experience of others teaching the Highland sheep-farmers to adopt a practise so advantageous, while there are men at hand for every purpose of agricultural labour?

From these statements, it seems to arise that the most beneficial mode of improving this hitherto neglected part of the empire is not by driving out all the inhabitants to cultivate the swamps of America, introducing in their stead a few south country shepherds with their flocks. On the contrary, it is our decided opinion, that the whole inhabitants may be usefully employed within the island; that it is very much for the advantage of the British Empire that it should be so; and that we are very blind indeed to our own interests, if we allow any speculations dictated more with a view to the improvement of the opposite shores of the Atlantic, than to the radical and essential advantage of our own country, to influence our conduct on such an important branch of our political oeconomy. The best and most powerful mode of bringing forth the productive energies of this part of the British Empire, is by a judicious mixture of the husbandry of grain, black cattle and sheep, adapted, according to circumstances, to the various situations which nature points out for

each. This is the conclusion formed by one whose mind could be affected by no bias from prejudice or theory to interfere with his observation and experience. ‘The culturable parts of the valleys are best adapted to cattle and corn; the hills for the summer pasturing of sheep, which, however, require the shelter of the valleys in winter; and the hills, on the other hand, are valuable to young cattle in the summer season. Again, the brae faces, or steep slopes of the sides of the valleys, are better adapted to sheep than cattle.*’ Lord Selkirk himself adds a testimony to the same truth, the more satisfactory that it is perhaps unintended. ‘The tract of country known by the general name of Highlands, is not every where mountainous; and there are situations where in all probability sheep-farming will not prevail. In some parts the country consists of low hills more adapted for pasturing black cattle than sheep; in others there is a great proportion of ara-

* Survey of Centr. Highl. p. 56.

‘ble land ; but (it is added) the climate is generally a discouragement to tillage, even where the soil and situation oppose no obstacles.*’ This last remark, however, which is founded on the descriptions which have been given of some parts of the western coast and isles, ought to be received with becoming caution : it appears in an apology for a conduct which nothing can justify, but the climate proving an unsurmountable obstacle to the people finding employment within the country.

The climate of that country, indeed, does not seem to be liable to any great objection, where it is an ascertained fact, that wheat of a good quality has been raised at the height of 900 feet above the level of the sea,† ; and surely it would be extremely unwise to condemn the whole of such a country to the rude culture of upland pasturage, instead of drawing from it the greatest quantity of vegetable food which it is capable of raising.

* P. 34.

† Preliminary observations to Surv. of Forfarshire, by Geo. Dempster, Esq; p. 6.

It seems to be extremely probable that in a few years the prevailing rage for sheep-farming will overstock the market, and induce the proprietors to think of returning to a more valuable employment for the low and arable part of their estates. But if they, in the meantime, adopt the principles advanced by Lord Selkirk, that the pasturage of sheep ought to be the prevailing mode of employing the land, and that this ought to sweep away every person not required by it, such a return will be, if not impossible, at least extremely difficult. The country will be reduced to a situation suffering under all the disadvantages arising from too scanty a population ; when there is no means of supplying the additional labourers, but from the slow, though gradual increase of marriages, owing to the high price of labour consequent upon the great demand for it. Let not those abandon the country during the paroxysm of a fever, which can be but temporary, who may be usefully employed within it. Find employment for them, and there cannot be a doubt

but they will remain. If some valuable and important discovery in mechanics were made, by which the labour of one half of the manufacturers of Glasgow and Paisley was supplanted, how would a speculator be listened to who should gravely recommend to government to force the people, thus displaced, to leave the country, and carry their manufacturing skill and industry to a foreign state? Would not the discovery of machinery, if attended by such consequences, really diminish the national strength, although it might leave a smaller population in possession of a greater quantity of wealth? But, on the other hand, would not government rouse and excite the patriotism of individuals to carry on such works as would employ the unoccupied and unexerted industry which had been saved by the discoveries of science? The temporary competition for employment would greatly benefit the country; and, by the lower price at which the manufactured article might be furnished, a market would be secured, which it would require an increas-

ing produce to supply. If this would be the consequence of a number of manufacturers being turned suddenly out of employment, how ought the interests of the state to prompt an opposite line of conduct, because the displaced workmen have left the agriculture instead of the manufactures of the country?

Grain, which is the staple commodity upon which the prosperity of every country must ultimately depend, should, if possible, be always raised within its territory sufficient for the support of its inhabitants. In small states, this may not be so very essential, as they never can excite any great jealousy, and must always place themselves under the protection of some powerful neighbour. But in a great state, such as Britain, it is sometimes dangerous, and at all times impolitic, to depend upon a neighbour, and consequently a rival, for a supply either of grain or stores necessary for the national defence: yet such is the present aspect of the political economy of this country, that, ever since the year 1769, grain has been imported, in-

stead of being exported in great quantities as it formerly was. The immense increase of our commerce and manufactures, and consequently of the population of the state, having preceded the advancement of agricultural industry, may, in some measure, account for this circumstance. It is possible, too, that legislative interference may also have had its influence. It is melancholy to consider, that when we could easily raise grain for double the present number of inhabitants, we should risk our prosperity to the good sense of the powers surrounding the Baltic. Grain has cost the nation, for the last ten years, not less than the enormous sum of L. 3,500,000 annually: the idea which the Northern Powers seem to entertain, that they hold in their hands the means of starving this country into compliance with their demands, has twice induced them to attempt a violent subversion of those principles of the law of Nations relating to Neutrals, which former times had sanctioned. Both times these attempts have been thwarted: but

in both the combination was extremely formidable, and made us tremble for our naval superiority. The time may come when the very wealth which this country circulates among the Northern States for the purchase of grain and naval stores, part of which might be easily raised by ourselves, may so far increase their power, and the capability of drawing forth their immense resources, that we shall no longer be able to resist their demands. Their obstinate adherence to the same principles in their neutral code for regulating commerce, leaves us no room for supposing that they will ever desist till their object be attained.

Scotland, and particularly the Highland district of it, assuredly is not so fertile as either England or Ireland. Still it will be able, without difficulty, to bear its share in the attempt to supply the inhabitants of the empire with grain from our own resources. From the ground already under tillage in the Highlands, if a proper system were adopted, at least twice the quantity of grain might

be raised ; and it may be predicted, that the consumption of grain for food will not increase by any means in proportion with an increase of inhabitants ; potatoes furnishing a most grateful substitute. This to a poor man is on many accounts a most invaluable root : it suits the climate ; it is produced in singular abundance ; it is a great enricher of the soil ; it affords a most nutritious food at an easy rate ; and it saves both the expence of grinding and baking.

To the idea of raising grain and other necessary articles sufficient for our own consumption within the country, it will surely be objected, that it leads us back to the old system of national jealousy, and forces the production of a commodity among ourselves, which it would be more advantageous to purchase from our neighbours by the exchange of some of our own productions which are encouraged by this trade. But the question is not about turning our industry from a more productive channel into one less so ; it is about

exciting the latent energies of our national industry, and finding employment for many who must otherwise either be a burden upon the nation, or withdraw themselves from the country. But, independently of this, the trade with those states from which we import grain, is not such an encouragement to our manufactures as may at first be thought; for from all of them we import a great deal more than we export to them, and, from Russia, about four times as much. It is not so much an opening for our manufacturing industry as a drain for our coin. This has been brought into the country, it is true, by exchanging for it part of our produce, for which those nations, from whom we received it, had nothing else which we stood in need of to give us in return. But by sending it once more out of the kingdom, we convert it into a circuitous foreign trade, the most unfavourable the nation can be engaged in. It would be much better employed in putting into motion the latent industry which is in search of employment,

and which might be exerted in producing grain within our own territory. It appears, then, that this drain is an unnecessary drain, as well as one highly prejudicial, as we have ample resources unemployed which would prevent this trade taking place at all.

The want of capital is the great obstacle to the better cultivation of the soil of the kingdom. Almost all the old proprietors have, on many accounts, very little ready money to lay out on improvements, which require a considerable sum to be taken from the fund of immediate consumption, and added to their capital. This the laws of primogeniture and entail make it in many cases extremely inconvenient to do. Still, however, as it cannot be denied that a state is great according to her population and resources, it seems a national concern, that every addition which is possible should be made to them. A nation on the continent of Europe may grow powerful by the gradual acquisition of territory from neighbouring states which are consolidated together, till one

great, powerful, and compact empire is formed. Our situation, surrounded and inclosed on all sides by the sea, precludes such a mode of aggrandisement; but then every acre which was once waste, and which is brought into cultivation, is so much added to the territory of the state. Along with this comes the additional quantity of subsistence, while its never failing attendant, population, keeps pace with it in a beautiful order, nicely adjusted by the author of Nature. Much money is expended, and cheerfully expended, upon the acquisition of some paltry island or insignificant possession abroad, which perhaps is the only fruit of a long war, except the loss of many brave men, and a great addition to our public debt: Ought not something to be contributed towards conquering and subduing our own territory? If landholders, whose capitals will not afford any very extensive outlay of money, were enabled to undertake the improvement of the mosses and waste grounds upon their estates, the benefit to the nation would be singularly

great. Large sums of money have been advanced by government at different times, to save the sinking credit of commerce, upon the occurrence of any great and unforeseen calamity ; and it has been wisely done. But why should not the agricultural interests of the country be equally well attended to? Are they either less important, or do they furnish a less ample security for repayment? The advance of a sum of money, not one half of what is sent out of the country for grain, to be repaid by instalments within a given period, would, in the course of a few years, bring into cultivation an immense quantity of land at present useless. One effect of this, among many other very important ones, would be to diminish the price of grain, which regulates the price of all our manufactures. This would in some degree counteract the necessary, but grievous burden of excessive taxation ; give a new spur to industry, and enable our manufacturers to supply the produce of their industry at a cheaper rate ; increasing the mar-

ket by bringing the power of purchasing within the reach of greater numbers. It has been well observed, that the manufactures of Great Britain consist rather of necessary and useful articles than of expensive luxuries *. The ascendancy which the middling classes are at present every where attaining in Europe, must therefore daily increase the demand for British manufactures, and thus increase every species of her industry. Any diminution in the price will necessarily augment the demand, by extending the power to purchase.

The remarks upon this subject, which have insensibly been drawn out to too great a length, cannot be better closed than in the words of the father of the science of political economy :
 ‘ The capital employed in agriculture not only puts into motion a greater quantity of
 ‘ productive labour than any equal capital
 employed in manufactures, but in proportion to the quantity of productive labour

* Lauderdale on Pub. Wealth, p. 259.

' which it employs, it adds a much greater
 ' value to the annual produce of the land and
 ' labour of the country, to the real wealth
 ' and revenue of the inhabitants. Of all the
 ' ways in which a capital can be employed, it
 ' is by far the most advantageous to society.'
 ' The ordinary revolutions of war and go-
 ' vernment easily dry up the sources of
 ' that wealth which arises from commerce
 ' alone. That which arises from the more
 ' solid improvements of agriculture is much
 ' more durable, and cannot be destroyed but
 ' by those more violent convulsions occasioned
 ' by the depredations of hostile and barbarous
 ' nations continued for a century or two to-
 ' gether ; such as those which happened for
 ' some time before and after the fall of the
 ' Roman empire in the western provinces of
 ' Europe *.'

2. ' The fisheries,' says Lord Selkirk, ' next
 ' to the cultivation of waste lands, seems the
 ' most important resource that is open to the

* Wealth of Nations, vol. i. p. 362. and p. 418.

‘Highlanders in their own country *.’ Such an admission from one who seems determined, at all events, to remove the present inhabitants of the Highlands for want of employment, at once shews that this must indeed be a very important object. The extent of coast to which fish of every kind resort, the inlets and bays that indent the west Highlands, affording excellent stations for innumerable quantities of shipping ; and the seemingly inexhaustible supply of fish, far greater than any probable demand, point out this as an immeasurable fund of wealth for the Highlands, as well as a means of employment to a great number of the inhabitants. The race of hardy and intrepid seamen, by this means trained for the service of the state, is unquestionably an object of great national importance. Besides this, the fisheries are always the source of a variety of manufactures and handicrafts, many, in a political point of view, essential to the existence of a commer-

cial country. It is not merely the seaman who is trained, or the fish-curer who is enriched by the trade, but the boat-builder, the sail-maker, the cooper, the ropemaker, the netmaker, &c. all derive employment from it. By this means they exert industry and acquire skill, which the higher interests of the state may one day call forth for their protection.

At this particular period, when we are told emigration must prevail to an extent hitherto unexperienced, till the whole class of small tenants be drained off, we cannot but regard the political aspect of the world, though in other respects sufficiently dark, as pointing out this source of national wealth most particularly to public notice. At this very moment the commerce of the Dutch is annihilated; and this trade, from which they derived so much of their wealth, and which was the cradle of their naval strength, is abandoned. While they remain as at present tributary to France, it cannot revive. Without the energy acquired from independence, and the security attendant on liberty, the Dutch commonwealth never would have

risen from the bed of the ocean, and never will again reach such a height of prosperity as even, on our own coasts, to exclude our enterprising merchants. The market, however, still continues the same ; and we have nothing to do but to step in to supply the demand, which the Dutch cannot now do.

The extent to which they formerly carried on the herring trade on the coast of Scotland is quite incredible. In the year 1618, they sent out 3000 busses with 50,000 men to fish ; and they required 9000 vessels more to transport and sell the fish : this employed by sea and land about 150,000 men, besides those first mentioned. Even though the fish were caught on our own coasts, we were obliged to send a sum of money out of the country for purchasing them, which would have been much more profitably employed in prosecuting the fishery ourselves. It will scarcely be believed, by those who are ignorant, that capital does not very easily flow into a new channel, till the old channels have all overflowed ; that when this trade, owing to the political si-

tuation of the Dutch, was destroyed, we did not immediately seize it. It seems the more extraordinary that we did not immediately avail ourselves of this favourable opportunity, as at this very time the population, the very sinews and life of our empire, was abandoning the country from a difficulty in finding employment. Nay, what is still more, we have become indebted to Norway for a supply of this commodity. Her trade, arising from the fisheries, has increased in proportion as that of the Dutch has declined ; so that in 1802 she exported no less than 26,500 tons of fish, although five years before, she had not exported one half of that quantity. In that year, 2500 tons were cleared out for Great Britain and Ireland*.

It has been calculated by men unbiassed by any national prejudice, and blinded by no speculative imagination, that the continental consumption of herrings might be from 250,000 to 300,000 barrels at the least, and

* Oddy on Commerce, p. 526.

probably much more, if the fish were equally well cured as those cured by the Dutch. Each barrel is worth, upon an average, L. 4; so that this fishery would produce to the nation at least L. 1,000,000 Sterling per annum*. The number of seamen employed could not be less than between 45,000 and 50,000. Can any advantages, to be derived from colonising America and peopling Canada, compensate the loss of such immense national resources? It is impossible for any person, who calmly views this subject, without passion or prejudice, to hesitate one moment in his opinion.

The employment of the fisheries is extremely congenial to the character of the Highlanders. It calls forth many of their most hardy and adventurous talents. Upon this subject, Lord Selkirk's testimony is very important: It is 'more congenial to the habits and inclinations of the people than al-

* App. No. 10. to Fourth Rep. on Coasts, &c. of Scotland.

‘ most any other that can be proposed ; and,
 ‘ without any very extraordinary encourage-
 ‘ ment, this branch of business may be car-
 ‘ ried as far as natural circumstances, and the
 ‘ extent of the market will permit*.’ A more
 decided testimony in its favour cannot be
 looked for, as it is very clear that no en-
 couragement could possibly extend it far-
 ther than the market and the abundance
 of the article will admit. When we consi-
 der the employment given to so many
 families, the encouragement to so many arts,
 and the consequent demand for so much of
 the produce of the earth, occasioned by a pro-
 per attention to the fisheries, it cannot but
 be looked upon as a most fortunate circum-
 stance, that we have now an opportunity
 of deriving all the benefit they are capa-
 ble of affording. We ought to profit
 even more than the Dutch did ; for, being
 so much nearer the fishing grounds than they
 were, we can catch herrings at a cheaper
 rate ; and consequently sell them in the mar-

* P. 96.

ket at a lower price than they did, which, as in other cases, will increase the demand. Although the Dutch have hitherto surpassed us in their mode of curing, this is chiefly to be accounted for from the circumstance of our market being principally the West Indies, where the herrings are disposed of for the use of the negroes ; and where not so much the delicacy of the taste, as the lowness of the price, is the inducement to purchase. But when proper attention is bestowed upon this article, and Dutch prisoners of war, who are skilful in this business, are employed to teach our people, can there be a doubt of our success ? The experiment was tried and succeeded in 1801. Herrings cured in this country were mistaken for Dutch cured herrings*.

The obstacles to the success of our fisheries, and consequently to the increase of capital, industry, and population derivable from that source, are shortly adverted to by Lord

* App. No. 10. to Fourth Rep. on Coasts, &c. of Scotk.

Selkirk; and it is pleasing to remark, that they are all adventitious; unconnected with the trade itself; and that they may be all easily remedied. The fiscal regulations regarding the salt laws form the prominent feature in this melancholy picture, and call loudly for the attention of an enlightened statesman. A necessary of life should, if possible, never be taxed, because it affects every other article of consumption and manufacture much more than it benefits the state. The absolute necessity of an exemption from duty for all salt used in the fishery, in order to encourage this rising and most lucrative manufacture, has induced the legislature to allow the fisheries to enjoy this privilege. But in order to obtain this exemption, it is necessary to go through so many troublesome and expensive forms that a poor fisherman is often disappointed when he least expects it. Besides, he must go so far to the custom house, (often forty or fifty miles) to perform all the requisites for obtaining the exemption, that before he can return, the

fish may have left the ground where their appearance made him prepare himself for the adventure. If he should fail in the minutest tittle of the multifarious Custom House regulations, he forfeits his claim, which very often is attended with his ruin. This most effectually deters him and those of the neighbourhood who hear of his misfortune (the justice of which they have perhaps the misfortune to be dull enough not to apprehend) from again embarking in so perilous an undertaking. But surely it is not enough to say that the regulations of the state, if they be manifestly impolitic, are sufficient to justify the depopulation of the country,—the loss of the nerves and sinews of the empire. But it may well justify the ingenious and intelligent author in explaining to the Legislature the impolicy of those regulations which produce such a baneful effect. Such a remonstrance from such a quarter could not fail of being listened to.

The connection which in most cases has hitherto subsisted between the fisheries and the

cultivation of land, Lord Selkirk considers as absolutely destructive of the success of the former: as the people, it is said, never fail to abandon the new occupation for that in which they have hitherto passed their whole life, wherever they can possibly find their wants supplied by it. But if this evil be of the magnitude which it is said to be, it can easily be removed in future; and we are told that 'the success which may justly be expected to attend those who first applied to it with steady and unremitting industry, is the only bounty which will be necessary to induce others to follow their example*.' Even their predilection for cultivating the ground may be employed for invigorating their exertions of industry in the other occupation: it will incite them to greater and more persevering zeal; and the consequent acquisition of capital will enable them to compete, at some future period, for a farm which at present they perhaps cannot possibly undertake. Even although their exertions should not yield this reward, they will

* P. 98.

still be profitable to himself and advantageous to the state, more so perhaps than if such an incitement had not existed.

There seems to be no insurmountable difficulty whatever, arising either from this source or from the salt laws, to impede the adoption of such measures as may very much extend our fisheries and employ a very great proportion of the inhabitants of the sea coasts. A foundation will thus be laid for the success of all those arts connected with its various branches.

There are yet other obstacles which have hitherto prevented the Highlands from reaping the full benefit of the valuable fishery upon the coast. These have not been adverted to by Lord Selkirk, perhaps because they are either temporary or may easily be removed.

1. The trade had already been monopolized by the Dutch, whose mode of curing herrings we have hitherto made very unsuccessful attempts at imitating. We seem to

have given up in despair all hope of rivalling them in the European market, contenting ourselves with the market in the West Indies. Besides, it is well known how extremely difficult it is, except through some violent political convulsion, to divert the course of trade from one channel to another; particularly when, even with the benefit of the bounty in favour of the British merchant, the foreigner is able to furnish a superior article at not an unreasonable price.

2. The bounty was only granted to busses or large vessels in imitation of the Dutch. This of course did not in the least degree add to the industry of the Highlands, as but few individuals there, in the employment of fishing, have capital enough to embark in such an undertaking as that of fitting out a large vessel, far less a fleet of such vessels. The busses generally belong to merchants in the lowlands, principally from the Clyde; and the only places in the Highlands, which have profited by this bounty, are believed to

be Campbelton, Rothesay, and Stornoway. Besides the bounty, being a tonnage bounty, did not by any means depend upon the success of the fishers, and still less upon the skill of the fish-curer; and as the bounty nearly compensated any danger of loss, it took away the greatest incitement to exertion, and of competition with foreigners.

3. The bounty not only did not forward the progress of the fisheries among the native Highlanders, but, on the contrary, it was highly disadvantageous to them. The native fishers could only carry on this trade in small boats, for which both the moral and natural situation of the country and of its inhabitants are suited. The islands and western shores of the Highlands are completely intersected by lochs, to which the herrings resort in their annual visit to our coasts; and the adventurous disposition of the people makes them navigate their small and open boats in the deep sea between the main-land and the islands, in pursuit of the shoals. The want of capital prevents them from fitting out any

more costly vessels. . . 'A boat-fishing,' says Dr Smith, 'seems to be the mode of fishing best adapted to the peculiar situation of Scotland; the fishers carrying the herrings on shore as fast as they are taken, to be either cured or consumed fresh*.' The bounty on busses operated directly as a discouragement to the boat-fishery, by giving such an advantage to the other. At last, a bounty of 1s. afterwards raised to 2s. was allowed on every barrel of herrings caught by boats. But by the same act (26 Geo. 3.) the bounty of 20s. per ton was continued to busses, besides 4s. a barrel, provided the number did not exceed $2\frac{1}{2}$ for each ton. This act, of course, did not at all mend the matter, as it still provided such a bounty against the boat-fishery as put it almost entirely out of the power of the proprietors of boats to avail themselves of this bounty, independently altogether of the many troublesome regulations for obtaining it.

We have in this, as in many other instances, endeavoured too much to force im-

* Wealth of Nations, B. 4. c. 5.

provement, at least so far as the native fishers were concerned. Improvement must always be gradual and progressive. But we attempted at once to force a market ; and, for this purpose, robbed the community in general, for the sake of one class of manufacturers, in order to enable them at once to compete with the long established traders in the foreign market. It obviously was the natural course of things so far to encourage the fishery, as first of all to supply our home market with a food which is cheap and wholesome. Before there could have been any necessity for exporting it, except to the West Indies, it might have lowered the expence of the subsistence of the lowest class of people, and, consequently, the value of our manufactures. During all this time, the fish-curers would have been gradually acquiring skill and capital sufficient to endeavour to drive the Dutch out of the market. The period, however, is come when we do not need to stand any competition for the complete monopoly of this trade. The market of Europe is open to

us ; let us seize it before other powers step into the situation which the political misfortunes of the Dutch have made them abandon. The trade has not yet settled in any new channel, although the Northern States, who enjoyed, and amply profited by their neutrality during the last war, are making great strides to avail themselves of this favourable opportunity, which never occurred before since the rise of Holland.

Nothing is so easy and so natural as for the people in the Highlands to adopt this line of life : all along the sea-shore and the sides of the lochs, they already prosecute it for their immediate supply. The example of collecting them into a village, for the more steady prosecution of it, which Mr Mac-lachlan has set, and which is mentioned with so much approbation by Lord Selkirk, shows how likely such establishments are to thrive ; since, in only two fishing seasons, the people were able to pay for the boats from which this profit was raised. So eagerly were the tenantry on his estate desirous of availing themselves of the same prospect of

success which had attended the first adventurers, that application for feus increased upon him to an amount beyond what he chose to listen to. There is one point, however, with regard to this establishment, upon which Lord Selkirk is very much misinformed. It is a very material point, too, as the very foundation of all his reasonings is, that no employment whatever, which they will adopt, can be found within the country for the small tenants. The settlers in this village are represented as being all of the class of cottars; whereas they were tenants and sons of tenants, who could not be otherwise easily provided for in a new arrangement which the proprietor was making of the farms upon his estate. Even if this had not been the case there, it will be found that, wherever the experiment has been made, no difficulty has occurred in accommodating the small tenants in this way.

It is not very easy to see why this establishment is mentioned as the only prosperous fishing village in the Highlands; and why

all other proprietors are represented as supine and negligent except Mr McLachlan. Had Lord Selkirk, instead of so steadily directing his eye across the Atlantic, only looked to the opposite side of Lochfyne, he would have seen a village there no mean rival to the one he so much approves of. The inhabitants of Kenmore profit most amply of the advantage of their situation: during the whole fishing season, their attention is exclusively bestowed upon that lucrative employment; from which, and from the produce of their looms, they have acquired a considerable capital. They have improved also a great deal of excellent ground which formerly produced nothing but heath. The town of Lochgilphead, in the same district of country, which at present affords very promising prospects of becoming a place of great importance, might also have satisfied him, that where attempts are properly made they have will not fail of success. But of all the omissions which are met with, the total silence with regard to Oban, can least of

all be accounted for. In a work professing to exhibit a faithful view of the present state of the Highlands, particularly as it regards the means of employing the people, it is singular that the success of this establishment should have been overlooked. Begun about 40 years ago, without any very peculiar advantages except the possession of a custom house, and the abilities and enterprise of its two first settlers, it has risen into eminence with a success unparalleled in any other village in similar circumstances. It now contains above 2000 inhabitants. The commerce which it carries on, enables the neighbourhood to exchange the commodities it can spare, for those it stands in need of; the wealth acquired from this barter has given an additional value to the ground for some miles round, and additional cultivation to it: and the people it has collected together have relieved the adjoining district of any excess in its population.

If Lord Selkirk had chosen to direct his attention to other parts of the country, he

would have found that the supineness which he charges against the proprietors, in not availing themselves of their advantages, is by no means well founded. That their efforts have not been more frequent is greatly to be lamented ; but no true patriot will overlook what has been done, particularly when it is considered that the first experiments are always the most difficult, and still more when these give the most satisfactory earnest of success. We need not despair of seeing fishing villages every where planted upon the western coasts, and that they will one day rise into eminence as commercial towns, as surely, though perhaps not so rapidly, as Greenock, which, half a century ago, was the abode of only a few fishermen. It has risen by receiving the population of Argyleshire and the neighbouring parts of the Highlands, so that, although it be in a lowland district, it has been remarked, that one may walk from one end of the town to the other without hearing a single word spoken of any language but Gaelic *.

* Statist. Acc. of Scotl. Vol. V. p. 583.

It is only necessary at present to take notice of what has been done in one corner of the country. Very considerable success has attended this kind of improvement in the case of Arnisdale on Loch Hourn, where some of the tenants on the estate of Glenelg have been set down, who could not otherwise be accommodated. They are thriving, although in a situation seemingly but ill calculated for such an undertaking. It is at a great distance from the more cultivated districts of the country, and the great market for fish; and the want of a ready internal communication, from the defective state of the roads, prevents the operation of even the little influence which so thinly peopled a country could have upon its success.

Not very far from the same place two different modes have been most satisfactorily tried, by which, among the small tenants as well as cottars, a change of employment has been introduced, and their predilection for the situation of cultivators of the ground overcome by their success in the fisheries. These experiments must be ex-

tremely gratifying to every person whose self-interest is not effected by their result ; for the class of small tenants, whom, without exception, Lord Selkirk dooms to exile, in order to cultivate the waste lands of speculators in America, have shewn no dissatisfaction whatever at their change of life : at least their contentment with their present prospects made them resist all the exertions that caused, in a great measure, the emigrations in 1802 and 1803.

One of these modes was simply to collect the people into fishing villages, leaving them, in a great measure, to their own exertions for future success. It was adopted by Lord Seaforth on the estates of Kintail and Lochalsh. Upon the latter, a village was established at the opening of Loch Duich, in a situation extremely favourable for the fishery of the Minch, at a place called Plock, with the view of providing for the tenantry of the estate a new source of emulative industry which might serve to draw off from an unskilful and too subdivided agriculture, the superfluity of persons employed

as farmers on their own account. The village of Plock was planned in 1793 ; and so rapid has been its success, that it now contains many settlers possessing decked vessels engaged in the fishery, who are in the way of accumulating considerable wealth, and thereby holding out a proof, that the possession of a farm is not the sole source of a comfortable maintenance. Another similar insituation has been formed at Dornie, on the estate of Kintail, upon the shore of the same Loch ; but as it is less favourably situated (being more remote from the Minch) this village is less advanced in its progress than Plock. There exists, however, no doubt of its ultimate and complete success.

The other mode referred to has been begun with equal success. In the more remote parts of the Highlands, where the non-residence of the proprietors, the extreme ignorance of the inhabitants, and their want of capital as well as defect of skill, combined in the greatest possible degree to darken every prospect of improvement, it seem-

ed that the interposition of a middle-man, under modifications easy to be devised, would be attended with the best effect in introducing sources of new and highly productive industry. Many and strong prejudices were to be encountered, and some difficulties to be obviated, but the experiment has been tried, and its success has been already assured. The circumstances are so pertinent and so interesting, that no apology can be required for a pretty full detail of them.

Several farms of the estate of Sutherland situated on the coast of Assint, which were well adapted as a station for the fishery of cod, ling, and herrings, and were occupied by a number of small tenants, were selected for the purpose of this experiment. They were let, on a lease of nineteen years, to Mr Macdonald of Tanera, a skilful and enterprising speculator in the fishery, under a variety of conditions. 1st, It was stipulated that these farms were to be possessed by other persons as his subtenants, but no part of them, on any pretence, by himself. 2dly, He was debarred from

making any profit by taking from his sub-tenants any higher rent than that payable by himself, and expressly prevented from exacting any services or other prestations, whatsoever. He was thus, in respect to the grounds let, a receiver to collect and pay over the rent, and at the same time answerable for the full payment of that rent; a circumstance which furnished one incitement, among others, to urge and assist the industry by means whereof the fund was to be raised for paying the rent. 3dly, Though he was permitted to subdivide the possessions to a certain specified extent, and thereby to introduce new tenants, he was debarred from removing any one, unless on failure either to pay his rent or to attend the fishery when required in moderate weather. Thus was he restrained in such a way as to prevent oppression, and, at the same time, furnished with the best stimulus to the industry of the people. 4thly, He was taken bound to furnish them with boats, nets, lines, and other fishing implements, or (in their option) the materials

for making those articles, at prime cost, and he was restricted to the produce of the fishery, as the only fund from which his reimbursement should be claimed. Lastly, as the reward of all the superintendence and instruction and outlay of money which Mr M'Donald was to contribute, it was stipulated that the people should give him, in an uncured state, all the fish they should catch, for which he should pay them according to the rate current at the time on that coast; and in case of any question or dispute on this point, it was agreed that the rate should be fixed by the award of any one (to be selected by the proprietor) of the clergymen of the maritime parishes, the coasts of which were the scene of the fishery.

It is truly pleasing to be able to record the result of this scheme. The restraints on the middle-man, however proper it was to stipulate them, have been imposed on a person whose conduct has shown that, with regard to him individually, they were quite unnecessary. Prompted by a benevolent wish for the wel-

fare of the people placed under his charge, as well as by a sense of their true interests being inseparable from his own, he has laboured, and successfully laboured, to inspire them with those views which lead to a course of patient industry, and to furnish them with instruction how best to turn their labour to account. They, on the other hand, though at first the prejudices of Highlanders led them to take fire at the idea of becoming subtenants, having been calmly exhorted to consider the safeguards against oppression which had been interposed, and having heard the advantages set forth which the proposed change in their situation was expected to procure for them, submitted to the innovation, and now consider themselves the happiest and most prosperous among the inhabitants of that princely estate. No seductive insinuations of trans-atlantic happiness have robbed this settlement of a single family ; and, although the herring fishery has been extremely unfavourable on that coast, ever since the plan was adopted (in 1802) yet the produce of the cod and ling fishery, to

which little attention was ever before paid by the natives, has abundantly rewarded their toil. In one year the price of cod and ling, furnished to Mr M'Donald by these tenants, surpassed the amount of two years rent of his farms.

The gradual subdivision of the grounds possessed by these fishermen will at length terminate in converting them into villagers; and in short there seems to be no doubt that these, or such like institutions, may one day rival the town of Stornoway in the isle of Lewis, which has grown great from a similar origin. From the effects of the capital, created principally by the fisheries, it now contains above 1,500 inhabitants, in handsome well built houses; it has a considerable quantity of shipping, trading even to the West Indies, America, and Holland.

The estate of Sutherland, from the generous pride which has always influenced the conduct of its noble proprietors, has to this day retained the full vigour of the feudal system. In no part of the Highlands has the

mode of management, so much reprobated by Lord Selkirk, been so steadily pursued ; so that the people who have left the Sutherland estate, except in the regiments raised by the family, have been few indeed. From this circumstance, in the eye of an American colonizer, this part of the Highlands will be considered as very much overstocked with inhabitants. Here, however, the experiment has been fairly begun ; the change of system has been commenced with moderation, and consequently it has not been attended with what is held out to be its necessary concomitant, emigration. For a few years unquestionably the rent obtained is less ; but can such a consideration enter into the account when the happiness of so many is procured by the sacrifice ? But even if this feeling did not sufficiently reward the noble proprietor, the immediate sacrifice will be most amply compensated at no distant period. The profit in a few years must be greater than if the country had been depopulated for the sake of sheep-farming. Whatever will admit of cul-

tivation, may be cultivated, as the people still exist for this purpose : and the additional demand for the produce of the ground will give a spur to industry which nothing else could give. There is every appearance, that, without very much diminishing the pasture, all the low arable land which surrounds the inland lochs and forms the bottoms and sides of the valleys, will be much more profitably employed in raising food for man.

It will not fail to be remarked that by far the greater proportion of those, both on the Seaforth and Sutherland estates, who now employ themselves in fishing, were small tenants. This incontrovertible fact throws down the very basis of Lord Selkirk's system, and shows it to be most completely devoid of that solidity which is the true merit and touchstone of every theory.

The success and advantage of the plan established on the west coast of the estate of Sutherland, have been such as to stimulate attempts of a similar sort on the eastern part of it. It has long been known, that upon this part of the Sutherland coast,

and the neighbouring coast of Caithness, a most lucrative fishery might be carried on, to which the only obstacles are the want of good harbours for the retreat of the fishing vessels in boisterous weather, and a steady market for uncured fish. In the view of remedying these defects, the Marquis of Stafford is engaged in the project of building, at his own expence, a harbour amply sufficient for every purpose ; and it is proposed to establish in the vicinity of it a respectable person, who will carry on a traffic for fish upon reasonable terms of contract, with such persons as may chuse to become villagers in that, or in any of the other stations in the vicinity which have been pitched upon for that purpose.

By these establishments, aided by every encouragement which can be afforded, there is no room to doubt that a spirit of industry will be gradually diffused, and that it will come ere long to be considered by many, rather as an advantage than a hardship, to be removed from the interior of the state to the

coast, where the fruits of industry will have begun to be enjoyed ; and in this way, a change of system may be gradually introduced, uniting the most productive employment of the soil with the preservation of all the inhabitants.

It may perhaps be the opinion of some, that it is idle to establish villages, or to employ the people in the fisheries ; for, if the market be sufficiently encouraging, the capital and skill of the merchants and mariners of the sea-ports in the south, will naturally look for employment there : so that the same number of men may be engaged in the fisheries, and the same quantity be caught, only by the inhabitants of one part of the empire, instead of those of another. It is impossible to assent to the policy of such an opinion, just as little as to those theories which would transfer the population of the mountains and vallies of the Highlands, for the purpose of manufacture, to the towns and villages in the south. The mercantile capital of our sea-ports will not fail to find the

most beneficial employment for itself, more particularly now when the commerce of the world is very much laid open to us. It would be impolitic to divert any part of it to a purpose which may be accomplished by the exercise of other capital and other industry, which could not be useful to the country in any other way. It will indeed probably be long before those creeks and bays of the Highlands, which at present give shelter only to a few fishing barks, shall have capital sufficient to vie with the commercial parts of the country in carrying on the intercourse between themselves and the Baltic, America, or the West Indies : But something may be done by a gradual extension of the fishery, and by the application of the wealth acquired from that source, in carrying on other branches of trade. Independently of this, we all know how feelingly attached the Highlander is to his native mountains, and what a pang it costs him to be separated from them : would not then those proprietors be justly chargeable with cruelty and mean avarice, if they

declined to forego for a few years a little additional rent, till the proper accommodation was provided for every person inclined to remain ? And would that government be said to study the happiness of the people, which should encourage their removal, and be the influential means of so much misery, when not only no loss, but the greatest possible benefit arises to the state from the opposite system ? The object of the rulers of a state ought not exclusively to be to create the greatest immediate quantity of national wealth ; such is only valuable to a nation, as it is to individuals, as a means of attaining a higher end : the happiness of the people should be the aim of every government ; and this surely never can be effected by driving from the bosom of the country its industrious inhabitants, and making them unwilling exiles.

If, in future, a Highland proprietor should think it for his advantage to change the system of management upon his estate, and dispossess many of the former occupiers, either

by the introduction of sheep-farming, or by enlarging his farms, he ought to do so gradually. It is not peculiar to the Highlands, that violent changes are always attended with inconvenience. He ought to give the people ample warning of his intention ; he ought to provide them with the power of remaining within the country if they chuse. Give them the means and example, and sure reward of industry, and there is no danger of the most flattering descriptions of foreign countries deceiving them. Furnish them with those little aids which an infant establishment stands in need of, and there is no fear that what in one respect is the advancement of the country, will be attended with the melancholy circumstance of emigration.

It is remarked, that the villages of Tobermorry and Steen, built for the Society for British Fisheries, scarcely possess a fishing boat ; their inhabitants are sunk in inactivity, and consist in general of the refuse of the population of the country *. While successful ex-

* P. 99.

ertions have been totally overlooked, of which any one, undertaking to give a view of the present state of the country, could hardly be supposed ignorant, it seems singular that Lord Selkirk should dwell upon the failure of the plans of the British Society. The account he had already given was sufficient to justify the sanguine hopes entertained from the fisheries: if these be just, American colonists cannot be encouraged till this source of employment be filled up.

But the failure of success, in the case at least of Steen, has been very much exaggerated: for in it, as well as in Ullapool, another village built by the same Society, a considerable trade is carried on, derived from the cod as well as herring fishery. No mention is made by Lord Selkirk of Ullapool: it would have warranted some departure from the general charge of failure brought against the Society's fishing villages.

The failure, however, we are told is to be accounted for by the practice of giving the settlers too great a quantity of land along with

their building ground, which distracts their attention, and prevents close and unremitting application to the fisheries. But while this may have had its effect, there were other causes which most powerfully operated to the disadvantage of these establishments. But it is pleasing to reflect, that they are obstacles which, so far as regards artificial regulations, experience will shew future patriots how to avoid ; and, in so far as they arise from the moral and natural aspect of the country, are every day more and more disappearing.

1. The Society proceeded on too extensive a scale in the buildings they erected, upon which they expended their capital, for which many other useful and otherwise unattainable purposes made a loud demand. The temptation of a house and a considerable quantity of ground for a trifling, or almost indeed without any consideration, may have induced some industrious settlers to reside there : but there cannot be a doubt that its attractions operated much more strongly as a bounty to the idle speculative and needy

adventurers, who, being set down without the means of purchasing fishing apparatus, were obliged to apply the little industry they were inclined to exert to the cultivation of their small lots of ground.

2. The great majority of settlers necessarily were those who were idle and discontented, who therefore had no countenance from any neighbouring proprietor to supply their want of capital, or instruct their ignorance. Without the constant and unceasing patronage of an intelligent proprietor, it is not easy to conceive how any very well directed efforts can be made at first by the people, be they ever so willing to exert themselves. Every thing is new to them. They know not their wants and their unskilfulness, till dear bought experience teaches them perhaps by their ruin. The settlers in these fishing villages were set down without any guide to direct them, except a Board of Directors resident in London. No wonder that the exertions of the Society did not meet with all the success that its

sanguine and zealous (laudably zealous) members had expected.

3. The want of good roads, and an easy communication with different parts of the country, before the attention of government was called to this subject, presented an invincible bar to the success of such establishments. The Society were incapable of doing much to remedy this defect. Had no obstacles at that time existed to retard a successful pursuit of the fisheries, the various manufactures, to which these give rise, might, by this time, have made considerable progress, affording employment to new settlers, and a foundation for other branches of manufacturing industry. The extreme difficulty of obtaining the raw materials for these, and bartering them with the produce of the fishery, arising from the want of capital among the settlers, has prevented the prospect of success which was once so reasonably entertained.

All these obstacles, however, are plainly artificial, and admit of being easily removed. They furnish a most useful lesson to

the Highland proprietors to imitate the example of those among themselves who have exerted their own influence with so much satisfaction to themselves, contentment among their people, and benefit to the state. Let them be persuaded that their object will never be gained so well by trusting to the activity of any body of men, however zealously inclined, as to their own endeavours. Such societies, too, will find that they will much sooner accomplish the object they have in view, by giving premiums to public spirited proprietors who shall establish villages and people them with industrious fishermen. The premium will be sought after, not so much as part of the profit upon a mercantile speculation, but as an earnest of the approbation of an enlightened public, which must ever be gratifying to a liberal mind. This proposition is offered as the surest and most advantageous way in which the British Fishing Society could attain its object; but it is not by this meant to be insinuated, that such a stimulus is necessary to induce an emulation

of that conduct, which has shown that a fishing village needs not necessarily be a nest of idle needy adventurers.

The public roads which are now making throughout the Highlands, and which traverse that country in every direction, opening an easy communication between the most distant parts of it, will remove the obstacle which was the greatest, both in the extent and in the formidable difficulties opposed to any plan for obviating it. When we consider the attention which government has been for some years paying to this most important of all objects, and, at the same time, reflect upon the present commercial state of Europe, it will be seen how much Highland proprietors upon the sea-coasts have an opportunity of improving their fortune, without injuring the population or diminishing the useful industry of the country, and without any necessity of resorting to those violent remedies which Lord Selkirk considers as the only cure for the disease. Nor are the Highland proprietors deficient in the

public spirit requisite on the present occasion. The liberality with which they have assessed themselves for making roads and erecting bridges throughout the country, and the alacrity with which they have always seconded and often prompted the zeal of our statesmen in forwarding measures of such great national importance, was certainly never surpassed, in any period of society, by the individuals of any state. In an unimproved and untraversed country, the opening of communication between one part and another has been almost every where a public and general concern ; both because, in the advancement of the individual portions of an empire, the good of the whole is forwarded, and that there is seldom sufficient wealth or sufficient public spirit among the proprietors for such expensive undertakings. In this last, the Highland proprietors have not been deficient ; and with regard to the other, their zeal has probably exceeded the expectation of government.

It is strongly inculcated in the writings of the French economists, that no expenditure

of public money can be so advantageous as in forwarding these schemes of improvement; and at a time when the British senate have been willing, even amidst unexampled difficulties, to lend their aid to the enlightened views of the minister, the speculations of Lord Selkirk must be calculated to damp an ardour which has been considered as productive of great advantages. We should listen with extreme and becoming caution to the instructions of a foreigner, with regard to the proper employment of our internal resources. Without meaning to depreciate the stake which the noble author possesses, or the interest which he feels in the welfare of this country, his concern for the prosperity of his trans-atlantic possessions, and the early zeal which he owns himself to have felt for the system of colonizing there, may be fairly enough supposed to warp the impartiality of his judgment, and to lessen the authority of his opinions. The speculations of Lord Selkirk are certainly written with a keener eye to the improvement of Canada than the be-

nefit of the mother country, or the happiness of its people.

3. The idea that there is room for the exertion of much industry, and consequently a prospect of the operation of all the advantages resulting from the accumulation of wealth, by the introduction of manufactures into the Highlands, does not appear to Lord Selkirk to be well founded *. His reasons for this opinion is that there are only one or two villages where the population would supply hands enough for even a small establishment ; but other difficulties, it is added, arise from the remoteness of the situation, and the infant state of the country, as to every improvement in the arts. These remarks, allowing them their utmost latitude, present only temporary impediments. Indeed, in the natural course of improvement, if the people be permitted and encouraged to exert their industry at home, those impediments must gradually and very speedily wear away.

* P. 104.

In every country the same obstacles have at first presented themselves, and have been overcome.

Any one, who attentively surveys the physical situation of the Highlands, must observe that they possess some very important advantages for the success of manufactures. There is almost every where an inexhaustible store of fuel, one of the most expensive articles in a poor man's family ; when the occupation of a peat-maker becomes distinct from every other, a supply will be obtained without distracting the attention from other pursuits. The circumstances of having great supplies of wood for charring has, for half a century past, established English companies at Bunaw, and in other places, for the purpose of converting pig iron into steel. If the want of coal be an obstacle to manufactures, the same obstacle is surmounted in every part of Scotland north of the frith of Tay. In the Highlands there is also a most wonderful profusion of streams and falls of water adapted for the purposes of machinery. This last

circumstance seems the only thing to which Halifax is indebted for being the seat of the most extensive woollen manufactures in England. Although the vicinity to a stream of water should always be attended to in fixing the situation of an inland village in the Highlands, it would be absurd to make an attempt all at once to introduce manufactures requiring expensive machinery.

Such, in general, is used only for the finer sort of manufactures, which form the æra of the highest and most improved efforts in the art. These would most assuredly not thrive at first for many obvious reasons; and, accordingly, such an establishment at Skibo did not answer the expectations of its public spirited undertaker. The simplest operations should be first of all accomplished; such are all those branches of industry which may be termed domestic. Throughout a great part of the Highlands, each family performs many of these for itself, owing to the thinly peopled country, which does not yet admit of a very minute separation of

professions. If it be ever permitted to the country to become better peopled, a proper separation of all the different occupations, connected with the advantage and comfort of human life, will take place ; that of the manufacturer will become a distinct employment. At present, almost all the lower class, and formerly nearly all of the highest also, used no articles of dress but the produce of domestic industry. A greater proportion of wealth, a longer acquaintance with the world, and a consequent taste for foreign articles, has rendered it less common now to see the produce of the flock upon the mountain cloath its master and his family, after having been manufactured in his house. But this only shows that a more liberal reward will attend the manufacturer who will now undertake to furnish what is obliged to be brought from so great a distance. Those manufactures are the most advantageous, which, without any great advance of capital, in the greatest degree enhance the value of the raw material, by the labour employed

upon it. These it should be the study of the proprietors and of government to introduce.

At present the wool of the Highlands is sent out of the country to be manufactured elsewhere ; and is then returned to it again in its manufactured state, at perhaps ten times its original cost. That this is a great loss to the Highlands is very plain, as the additional value given to the raw material, by the labour of the manufacturer, is just so much lost to it for ever. But it may not at first sight be so apparent that this is also a loss to the country at large, because the expence of the carriage of the raw and bulky material might be saved, and only expended upon the valuable manufactured article ; besides, in another point of view, the manufacture would also be cheaper, because the workmen require less wages in a cheap country. If it be thought that, even under such advantages, the home manufacturer would not be able to compete in the market of the Highlands with the sale of the product of the English manufactories,

it clearly would well reward the efforts of any person who should supplant the ill-directed, unskilful, and therefore expensive efforts of 'domestic industry. Every family, instead of supplying their own wants, would find it cheaper to apply to the manufactory at their door. This coarse manufacture would produce another very great saving to the country, by introducing the knowledge of *stapling*, or sorting the wool into its various qualities ; from the imperfect manner of doing which at present, a very great loss is every year sustained. Can there be any reason why our own country should not be able immediately to work up its wool into coarse flannels, serges, or blankets, which would lay a foundation for future progress, as the skill, the capital, and the industry of those employed increased ?

The extent to which the manufacture of cotton has been carried on at the principal seats of that species of industry, has introduced a mode of operation extremely beneficial to remote districts. It is likely to be

more extensively pursued with the progressive increase of the manufacture. The cotton, after being spun into thread by those ingenious contrivances which so much diminish labour, is sent to various parts of the country to be woven into cloth, and, when so done, it is returned to the manufacturer. It is attended with this advantage, that it requires no accumulation of population in one place, and no advance of capital in the weaver to carry it on; a single loom is all that is required. In the county of Argyle this has already been carried to a considerable height, owing not to any superior aptness in the disposition of its inhabitants for manufactures, but merely from the advantage of their greater vicinity and connection with the manufacturing districts on the Clyde. What is still more, a very considerable quantity of cotton cloth is also sent into the same districts, partly for the purpose of having the operation of *tambouring* performed upon it, which is done with a degree of taste and neatness highly creditable to the inhabitants. The same plan,

together with all its advantages, will be gradually communicated to other parts of the Highlands, in proportion as the communication with the manufacturing districts is more and more opened up.

The establishment of the cotton manufactories on the banks of the Clyde, was entirely owing to the circumstance of this being the most commodious place for landing the produce of our West Indian colonies. There was no other reason for fixing it in that spot. It seems to be no unreasonable speculation to think that, through means of the Caledonian Canal, Inverness may one day become the Paisley of the North. From particular circumstances, it has happened that a very great number of the proprietors of the cotton islands, taken from the Dutch during the late and present wars, are natives of the counties in the neighbourhood of that northern capital. It would be more agreeable to them to dispose of their property to persons near than at a distance. Probably some adventurous individual among them may set



on foot such establishments in that place, which would add very greatly to the comfort of the people. The great market of Germany could be just as easily supplied from Inverness as from Glasgow. Although it be peopled exclusively by Highlanders, the manufactories it at present carries on are deficient in no one particular which can recommend them to public notice. It is making rapid advances in wealth and population. From the advantage of the river Ness, and a good harbour, it possesses every requisite for manufactures and commerce.

The linen manufacture may be pursued with peculiar propriety in the Highlands, as it may be carried on by a detached population. It is so in Ireland: and it may be remarked as something singular, that it flourishes principally in the northern provinces; between which and the west Highlands so close an intercourse has been kept up for many centuries, that the inhabitants may in fact be said to form but one people, in regard to language, manners, and dispositions. If

manufacturing industry flourishes there, and furnishes a great source of national wealth, is it to be believed that a Highlander's labour would not be equally profitable? Their present indolence, Lord Selkirk says, has been often remarked: this, 'however, is not to be ascribed 'to inherent dispositions, but to the circumstances in which they are placed; to the 'want of sufficient incitements to industry, 'and to the habits which have naturally 'grown out of such a situation*.' How can a person be industrious, who has nothing on which his industry can be exerted? A race of men, who depend more on the produce of their flocks than of their fields for subsistence, cannot but be idle. These supply the wants of nature: his activity is excited only by the love of amusement. Indeed, it may be remarked, that indolence is very seldom the ruling passion of individuals or of nations; but, on the contrary, growing desires and wants, as civilization advances, rouse them

* P. 80.

more and more into exertion. The same race of men exist among the mountains of Wales; but very few countries exhibit greater instances of manufacturing industry, and the improvements derivable from that source. Of the success which the introduction of the linen trade has met with in the Orkneys, a most interesting account has been lately published *. These islands surely were as little prepared for the reception of any innovation from former habits of thinking and acting as any part of the Highlands can possibly be; yet although this trade was only introduced in the year 1747,—though it had every disadvantage, from prejudice and a defective population, to strive against and overcome,—though the public encouragement given to it is extremely small, still, independently of the quantity of thread, which is exported in great quantities, above 50,000 yards of linen were stamped in the year 1799.

* Hist. of the Orkney Isles. Barry's, p. 368.



Connected with the linen manufacture, the culture of flax cannot be too strongly recommended, for which the Highlands seem to be peculiarly adapted. It is in general, indeed, thought to be an exhausting crop; but this has happened only through mismanagement. In a climate which is rather moist, and upon ground improved from moss, which can always supply a fresh quantity of vegetable substance for a calcareous stimulus to act upon, the very great advantages derivable from a flax crop ought least of all to be overlooked. The produce of an acre in the county of Caithness was no less in value than 16l. 8s. 3d *. Take the produce, however, at 15 l. on the field, it will be worth 20l. when it comes from the mill; it will be worth 60l. when spun into yarn; and more than 100 l. when woven into cloth and bleached. Great, then, would be the advantage from this application of labour, in all its various branches, to the produce of the ground; and there is nothing surely

* Surv. of North. Count. p. 270.

which can prevent it. The culture of both flax and hemp seems to be a very great national object to a commercial people, whose pre-eminence principally consists in preserving the empire of the sea. It would be much for the advantage of such a country not to depend upon any foreign state for a supply of those necessary articles. In Ireland very great progress has been made within a few years in raising those articles of manufacture: much of the present flourishing state of the exports from that country is owing to this. Although Scotland is little inferior to Ireland in point of capacity for raising those articles, it has been so much neglected that little as yet has been done: wherever the experiment, however, has been made, success has uniformly attended it. The trustees for manufacturies, fisheries, &c. do not offer premiums for the cultivation of flax in any of the Highland districts: an omission which should be immediately repaired.

It is very true, that, by this plan, less money will circulate among foreign nations, their

progressive improvement will of course be slower; and they will be less able to furnish an increasing market for our manufactures. But it would be much better, that, in this way, a little of the capital at present employed in manufacturing the raw materials of foreign countries, and exporting them in that state, should be turned to the cultivation of the soil of our own country, the most profitable of all manufactures; more especially when this important consequence follows, that our prosperity will be less at the mercy of the rival jealousies of other states, whom we are raising to an equality with ourselves sufficiently formidable. The state would also benefit, in another point of view, by occupying a greater number of its people in a healthy invigorating employment, and perhaps somewhat less within the noxious walls of a crowded manufactory. But, in truth, it is not very likely that any great decrease in our manufacturies, from this cause, would take place: For we should thus be able to furnish them cheaper, by not having to send to a great distance for

the raw materials. The money which now goes abroad to put in motion the industry, and increase the resources of other countries, would be sufficient to cultivate our own waste lands by means of labour, at present very much unemployed.

Among all those sources of industry, there is none that requires any great accumulation of people in one spot. But if such were necessary, it could be very soon supplied. For there is a disposition in man which strongly impels him to society ; he naturally feels a desire to associate with his fellows. The ease with which the scattered population of the country has been assembled into a village, is a strong proof of this. The satisfaction which the people derive from this sort of union among themselves, rewards the trouble which all infant establishments require. Their labours seem more profitable as they are certainly more light when carried on together. Of the examples which exist in different parts of the country of the success of such establishments, the following may be instanced as

one of the least promising, but which has completely answered the sanguine expectations of the proprietor, by the beneficial consequences which have resulted from its advancement. Mr Cumine of Auchry planned a regular village upon the moorish part of a farm, which altogether yielded only 11l. a year. He divided it into 75 feus, occupied by a set of industrious, honest, and active people, who, instead of the original rent, produced him, in 1792, from 120l. to 150l. annually. He introduced the spinning and weaving of linen yarn; and the consequences continue to be greatly advantageous to the settlers*. The village of Grantown is another strong proof of the same remark; situated in the very centre of the Highlands, without any natural advantages except the neighbourhood of vast quantities of moss, and the protection of its public spirited proprietor, it has in the course of a few years attained a stability almost exceeding belief.

* Statist. Acct. Vol. VI. p. 129.

In the vicinity of every moss, a similar establishment would have the same certainty of success. While the original settlers are occupied in clearing the ground and improving it, their children may be easily taught some effort of manufacturing industry. This progress has been followed most successfully both at Grantown and at Cuminestown.

It is said, indeed, that the Highlanders are not nice workmen *; so that they never are employed in any other than the drudgery parts of a manufactory. But would a ploughman or day-labourer in the lowlands, or in England, be in the least degree more expert the first time he was so employed, or is the one less capable of learning than the other? Experience shews, that in no art, which requires skill or dexterity of execution, is it possible to arrive at any proficiency, unless the versatile habits of man be moulded to it at that period of life when every impression is easily and deeply made upon the mind. Yet,

* P. 83.

wherever the experiment has been made upon the young, the success has been fully equal to expectation. To them has been owing, in a great measure, the success of the establishment at New Lanark. But there does not seem to be any reason for attempting any great extension of manufactures among the more advanced in life, and those whose habits are already formed. All of them, it cannot now be doubted, may be employed in a manner perhaps more congenial to them. Their children, however, should be encouraged to avail themselves of the increasing manufacturing property of the country.

Every proprietor in the Highlands may do this without any risk to himself, at a very trifling expence, and with the most complete certainty of success. It is not necessary that he should establish great manufactories, involving himself in a costly undertaking and troublesome superintendence; he has only to proclaim annual premiums for industry, and ensure an adequate return for their la-

bour, and the object is attained. An example of this has been attended with the most gratifying success to the public spirited and accomplished individual who planned it, who, on an annual visit to one of the most delightful and romantic spots in the Highlands*, at once saw why industry had made so small a progress, and comprehended how this was to be remedied. These cares dignify even the most exalted station. An annual competition is established, where the most industrious and the most skilful are rewarded, and where all find a ready sale for their manufacture. At the last of these meetings, no less than 300 articles, the produce of various kinds of domestic industry, were exhibited in a district very far from being populous even in the Highlands. The exertion which formerly ceased with supplying the few wants it could provide for, now looks with confidence to a market for the utmost efforts of their ingenuity and labour.

* At Kinrara on the banks of the Spey.

A few years more of the same enlightened patronage will introduce such a spirit of enterprise, and the means of exerting it, that no further encouragement will be required for attaining the very beneficial object of creating habits of industry among those who, without such patronage, might have continued to be so little employed, as to be almost useless in a national point of view.

Lord Selkirk remarks, that the exertions, which may be made with a view to the establishment of manufactures, must be considered as laudable ; but the object is of no national importance ; and is of a totally different nature from the other resources of the improvement of waste land, or the extension of the fisheries, by which a net and absolute addition is made to the production of national wealth ; but the success of a manufacturing establishment in the Highlands would have no farther effect than to fix the seat of a certain portion of industry in one part of the country rather than in another *. But even

* P. 107.

this is enough for our present purpose, which is to find employment for the Highlanders within their own country. People are always, and naturally, much more attached to the place of their nativity than to any new situation ; they are much more contented and happy in it, consequently better men and better citizens. Besides the establishment of manufactures, throughout every portion of the empire, must diffuse their beneficial effects over the whole. Each part will keep pace with the other in improvement and civilization, and no one part will reap a greater share of wealth from this source than another. Above all, it is obvious, that the period when the manufactures of a country arrive at their utmost perfection, is when the raw bulky material is worked up on the spot where it was raised, into the more portable and more valuable manufactured article, and that the market for consuming it is brought as near as possible. This is not practicable to the fullest extent, for many reasons ; but the country must always profit exactly in

proportion as the departure from it is the least.

The vicinity to towns and villages, the seat of manufactures, always operates as a bounty in favour of the ground in the neighbourhood. This bounty should operate as equally as possible. The plan of removing the population of the Highlands to the southern districts, converting that whole country into a sheep-walk, would in fact put the Highlands out of the reach of any improvement, condemning it to remain in its present unimproved state, or rather in that state of depopulation to which, according to the opinion and advice of Lord Selkirk, it is fast tending; a measure which is neither just nor politic. The experiment of driving away the inhabitants for the sake of augmenting the size of the farms and their rents, was fully tried above a century ago in Galloway; an actual rise of rent was the consequence at the moment. But the ultimate impolicy of the measure may now be fully ascertained, by comparing the value of estates there with

those in the equally mountainous districts of Perth and Angus. There the people have been preserved, and manufactures introduced. Towns and villages are daily increasing in populousness and wealth, and furnish the farmer with a certain market, occasioning at the same time a demand for land which has quadrupled its former value.

The rule, then, which ought ever to be kept in view by the Highland proprietors, in the exercise of their undoubted right of administration over their estates, is to make no violent nor unexpected change. It is not very probable that many more districts will be swept of their inhabitants for the sake of sheep-farming; but if any proprietor thinks it for his interest to adopt such a system of management as must dispossess any of his tenants and cotters, let it be done gradually, and with sufficient notice to the people to enable them to provide other means of employment for themselves: In such a search every facility should be afforded them, both by the proprietors and by government: the important

public and private advantages resulting from removing the necessity of emigration justify this interference. If numerous farms, as at present occupied, are to be converted into one sheep-walk, and employed solely in that kind of husbandry, they ought to be gradually turned to this use. Those who are dispossessed, should be encouraged to apply themselves to the fisheries, or the improvement of waste lands, and reap all the benefits attending their union in the animating intercourse of a town or village. The capital which would have carried them and their families to America, and maintained them till they had cleared enough of land for their support, will enable them fully to enjoy the profits of well directed industry. All this may be accomplished by merely making the change of system gradual and progressive ; not all at once deserting the people whose services as cultivators are dispensed with, but aiding their ill-directed though ardent exertions to their own and their country's good. This seems to be a very important point ; and in so far,

Lord Selkirk seems mistaken when he maintains the opposite opinion, that it signifies little whether the change be rapid or gradual : for this can be true only on the supposition that it is quite impossible to find any occupation within the country for any additional number of people. . In no country whatever, which is not either stationary in its progress or declining, can this be true. Our country most certainly is in neither of these predicaments, but on the contrary is making great and rapid progress towards the highest pitch of national wealth which its natural and moral resources are capable of reaching. It is indeed admitted by the noble author, that the class of cotters may be absorbed into other employments ; that they must remain because they cannot afford to transport themselves to America ; they cannot starve ; and therefore they must employ themselves as they best can. But the small tenants would, it is said, consider themselves degraded by engaging in any of these new occupations ; they would rather expose themselves to the danger of an untried element,

the miseries of a distant voyage, the difficulties of a new country, and the painful regret of their former homes, and the friends they have left behind, than conquer those artificial feelings which are very little becoming their situation and circumstances. The favourers of emigration and the proprietors of waste land in America must ever unceasingly press this idea upon the public, as unless this be adopted, government cannot be supposed to favour the colonizing system, nor can they have the sanction of their country to plans for their own individual aggrandisement. But wherever the experiment has been fairly tried, the fullest success has attended the employment pointed out for the small tenants. Where fishing villages have been established, no difficulty has been found in procuring occupiers from among the tenantry. In many parishes all those who have been displaced have remained as villagers, and they have been always found to embrace with eagerness the means of occupying themselves in the cultivation of waste ground, which in many places have, within the memory

of persons now living, doubled the arable ground. Their children, and the children of those employed in fishing, have already in many places united their efforts to those of the manufactures who were formerly scattered about the country, and are laying the foundation of the most solid and substantial improvements.

It is a gratifying proof of the soundness of the principles here advanced upon the subject of emigration, that in every one of the Statistical Accounts of the Highland parishes, published by Sir John Sinclair, the same means for obviating the supposed necessity of emigration have been pointed out as amply sufficient for this purpose. This avowal will no doubt detract from the originality of these remarks, a merit which is claimed by Lord Selkirk for his own opinions, and most willingly conceded to him. But while he avowedly contraverts received opinions, and offers views which have previously passed unnoticed, can we suppose that one or two casual visits by a stranger unacquainted with the

language of the people, except from short intercourse with a few discontented emigrants, can furnish better sources of information than the united voice of the clergy ; men resident among the people committed to their charge, conversing every hour with them with a primitive simplicity, intimately acquainted with their feelings and their wants, and regarding, with anxious solicitude, every thing which can add to their temporal or spiritual welfare ? Instead of looking to these records of the manners and dispositions of the inhabitants, ought we to receive our information on this subject from America ? Grant that the whole Highland clergy may be biassed in their opinion, or mistaken in their conclusions, are there no circumstances which could have blinded the author of these observations ? Must he be regarded as the only person who, on this subject, is entitled to form an opinion, and guide the opinions of others ?

The view which the author has given of the Highlands seems to be much more appli-

cable to the state of the country half a century ago than to its present condition. Since the breaking up of the feudal system, the opinions of the people are not represented as having undergone any change ; their passions appear as strong, and their feelings as irritable as ever. The proprietors are charged with the same heedless wantonness which characterised the first introduction of the system of sheep-farming, and the people with the same peevish discontent and dislike at following any new occupation. Every thing which has been done to shew the possibility of improvement without emigration is overlooked, or its success depreciated, and future attempts are discouraged and ridiculed.

VIII. That emigration has no permanent effect on population, is a maxim which needs no other illustration than these contained in the very ingenious work of Malthus. Wherever there is room for the industry and occupation of a family, there, in the course of a few years, a family will spring up : and,

If any inducement should tempt that family to emigrate, its place will, in the course of time, be again supplied by another, so long as there is room for its industry and the means of its subsistence. In every country, according to the improvement of its resources, an accession to its population every year takes place: in some greater, in others less, according to circumstances of a moral and political nature. The Highlands form no exception to this remark, as it is certainly more populous now than it was fifty years ago, notwithstanding the great emigrations from some districts. But this argues nothing in favour of emigration; just as little as the success of particular trades or manufactures proves the wisdom of the impolitic interference by which almost every government has attempted to advance the prosperity of the state. For the question truly is, What would have been the result, if employment had been provided, and the people encouraged to avail themselves of it, till every source was completely filled up? What would have been the

number of people usefully occupied? In the steady and even course of progressive improvement, the population must necessarily have been much greater than it is at this day; and much misery and wretchedness would have been spared to those who have been obliged to leave the darling objects of their affection for the deserts of America. A country, or district of a country, once depopulated, by being devoted to pasturage, does not soon recruit itself through the operation of its own internal energies. While the same system continues, and no new occupation is provided, it must always throw off every addition to the existing stock. In such a situation, the want of labourers is almost an insuperable obstacle to the introduction of any change by which more people are employed: it is only by very slow degrees, and during a succession of generations, that such difficulties can be overcome by natural means. The mountains of Spain were drained of their inhabitants by the colonising system introduced upon the discovery of America: they were

then covered with sheep ; from which state the country, through the concurrence of natural and political causes, has never recovered.

The instances produced by Lord Selkirk to show, that, notwithstanding great and frequent emigrations, the population has not been affected, it will be observed are drawn exclusively from those parts of the country where the sheep-farming system, with its depopulating consequences, has not been adopted. So that although, in general, it may be true that any emigrations which take place from a country in the ordinary course, that is, when the population increases more rapidly than the means of subsistence, do not ultimately affect the amount of population ; yet it is surely a most fallacious mode of reasoning to apply this general principle to the present case. When the means of procuring subsistence regulate the necessity and amount of emigration, it is plain that the population cannot be diminished ; for the country, in that case, maintains all the inhabitants it possibly can, which will always be, at least up to a

certain point, progressively somewhat more than it previously did, as an increasing necessity always augments industry, and increased industry never fails to render labour more productive. But this is a case widely different from emigrations, which originate in violent convulsions in the state, in the animosities of civil and religious party, or in a violent and rapid change of system, which in a moment renders unnecessary, in their former employments, the labour of half the inhabitants of the country. Is it possible to suppose that such emigrations do not produce a permanent effect : that they do not reduce the population of the country not only below the standard fixed by the quantity of provisions, but far below the limit pointed out by the useful and profitable industry which they can furnish to the state ? The acknowledgment of Lord Selkirk himself, that, in a few years, the Highlands will become one great sheep-walk, inhabited by a few shepherds and their dogs, is the best illustration possible of the consequences which his Lordship expects

from the principles and the plan recommended so strongly as the proper mode of making the Highlands productive. If the whole ground is to be appropriated to the pasturage of sheep,—if the fishery will not occupy the supernumerary population, and if manufactures will not thrive, how are the people to subsist? Will the place of those who, in such circumstances, leave the country ever be supplied? Perhaps it is not very easy to ascertain with accuracy what have been the effects of the sheep-farming system upon population; and it is therefore still more difficult to estimate the amount of the depopulation, if it should prevail universally. From the two following facts, however, a conjecture may be formed on this subject. From a medium estimate in one parish, it would appear that the inhabitants in it were formerly three times as numerous as they now are*: in another, it appears that the population, before the introduction of sheep-

* Statist. Acc. of Scotl. vol. VIII. p. 427.

farming, was in the proportion of four to one more numerous than at present *.

The effects which have attended the depopulation thus predicted are so extremely different, as far as regards the welfare of the state, from those which attend depopulation from other causes, that it is impossible for the utmost ingenuity to confound them together. When the inhabitants of a country are thinned from the raging of war, of pestilence, or of famine, the country, though it suffers severely in its resources in the mean time, gradually recovers from the devastation of these scourges of the human race : a demand is created for men from the vacancies which are thus left to be filled up in the usual occupations carried on in the country. In those parts of the Highlands, on the other hand, where the inhabitants are expelled for want of employment, there is no vacant space for the industry of man left to occasion any demand for a supply ; and if there be no

* Stat. Acc. of Scotl. vol. IV. p. 338.

market for a man's labour, men will not be produced. The supply follows the demand in this as in every other case.

The emigrations from the Highlands, without ultimately affecting the number of the people, operate, it is said, a very desirable change in their character and composition *. This change, so advantageous, is proposed to be accomplished in a way the most extraordinary that ever was thought of for the advancement of a country. It has been generally conceived, that the strength of a state consists much in the number, the independence, and the public spirit of its native yeomanry, who feel an interest in the welfare of their country, and know that their fortune is staked upon its prosperity. But the plan of Lord Selkirk is to drive out all the present tenantry,—all those who have any capital, and to retain only the cotters, the poorest class, who, in most countries, feel themselves but little interested in the fate of that society

* P. 116.

of which they are considered as the lowest order. A few of these, in the station of labourers, and a few south country shepherds, is to constitute the population of the country. It is impossible that such an arrangement of society can be politically expedient. Can a stranger form a proper link of connection between the proprietor and the people upon his property? Will the cotters and tenants place themselves as willingly under them as their hereditary employers and protectors? It is impossible, under such a system, that all ranks should be firmly united together with that cordial and common zeal which is the best safeguard of the state.

The same change in the character of the inhabitants, which has taken place in other parts of the island, will in due time take place in the Highlands also, without any of the disadvantages of emigration. In the course of a few years, the inhabitants of the sea-coasts will betake themselves to the fisheries, and those of the inland country to manufactures, allowing the farms to be enlarged or

waste lands more fully cultivated ; the class of labourers will become a distinct order from the cultivators of the earth, as these will be from the persons employed in the fisheries and manufactures. The most industrious and the most skilful will acquire wealth, and occupy the higher rank among them. The descendants of the same people, who bled in the contests of York and Lancaster, now cover the fields with grain, and supply the whole world with manufacture. The less emigration is encouraged, the more quickly will this change take place : The effect of necessity is the best spur to exertion ; the change from one mode of life to another is an effort of exertion, which few are willing to make, merely from the distant, and perhaps uncertain, prospect of gain. It is only on finding the old employments overstocked, and that the due reward of the labour and skill applied, has not been obtained, that the new road to wealth is followed. In a thinly peopled country, the inhabitants naturally combine together a number of often very dissimilar trades. The market does not afford

full employment for one person in each ; he must therefore go and leave the country altogether without any such profession, or make up for the defective demand in the one by the similarly defective demand in another. Upon the sheep-farming system, however, the country would be reduced even to a greater degree of barbarism than ever : instead of being in a progressive state in all the arts and luxuries of life, it would become rapidly retrograde. The few artists who at present find a livelihood, from the demand of the country, would be obliged to emigrate along with those who occasion the demand ; and the population that remained would find no necessity, and therefore no inclination, to force themselves into new channels of industry. The country, after assuming the rude and semi-barbarous condition of the shepherd state of society, would remain stationary perhaps for ever, refusing its natural resources to the state, and the comfort of a civilized life to its inhabitants.

Lord Selkirk most properly warns the country against any attempts by means of legislative interference to retain the small tenants in their present situation. Such an attempt unquestionably is inconsistent with every principle of good government. Let their situations be made advantageous to them, and prevent as much as possible the delusive representations of foreign emissaries, and there is no fear of any thing else being required to keep them contentedly at home. But if this should not be thought sufficient, their unwilling services never could add to the welfare of the state; and no sober thinking man ever dreamt of restraining them. That there would be many who would resist the inducements that might be offered for their remaining, there is no reason to believe, and, indeed, the contrary appears, from the experience of the alacrity with which they have disposed of themselves within the country wherever there was an opportunity

afforded them in the moment of calm and deliberate thought.

Indeed, it seems singular that Lord Selkirk should think it necessary so frequently to recur to grave arguments and earnest exhortations to dissuade the attempt to put a stop to emigration by coercive measures. It cannot surely be from the motive which induce some adversaries to impute opinions and doctrines to their opponents too absurd for them ever to have thought of or entertained. Such a mode of reasoning is sometimes extremely successful, as it brings in the assistance of ridicule, one of the most powerful auxiliaries in argument.

Although, at first, there was most certainly much irritation at the innovation introduced into society upon the first breaking up of the patriarchal system in all those districts of the Highlands where no other means but emigration was left for the people, yet assuredly it is going too far to assert, that 'the progress of the rise of rents, and the frequent removal of the ancient possessors of the land,

‘ have nearly annihilated in the people all
 ‘ that enthusiastic attachment to their chiefs
 ‘ which was formerly prevalent, and have
 ‘ substituted feelings of disgust and irritation
 ‘ proportionally violent*.’ This overcoloured
 ed portrait may be easily accounted for
 from the nature of those opportunities which
 Lord Selkirk most frequently had of inti-
 mately knowing the manners or feelings of
 the Highlanders ; these presented to him on-
 ly such as had been driven from the country
 by real or imaginary necessity, and who
 looked upon their landlord or their chief as
 the sole cause of their miseries. Any person
 who has travelled through the Highlands
 must have perceived that although designing
 men have most zealously instilled dissatisfac-
 tion into the minds of the people, even where
 there existed no just grounds for apprehen-
 sion, yet the feelings which are interwoven in
 the very constitution of their strongly impas-
 sioned minds cannot soon be obliterated.

* P. 119.

Nay, when the wide Atlantic roars between them, they still look back with fond regret upon their country and their chief.

It cannot be questioned, that it tends in no common degree to the peace of a country*, that the leaders of faction and the inciters of sedition should leave it, rather than that they should attempt to make the constitution more palatable to their ideas of justice and freedom. But it is never necessary that many should abandon their native country on this account. In all popular tumults and discontents, the ringleaders are but few; and, although they may be able for a time to animate the bulk of the people with sentiments similar to their own, yet the mass, when this leaven is withdrawn, sinks again into its former state of quiescent obedience. The tranquillity of England has been much indebted to the drain occasioned by the American colonies. But of all people on earth, the Highlanders are perhaps the most attached to the government under which they

* P. 120.

live. Lord Selkirk bears ample testimony in favour of their loyalty ; a testimony the more valuable, as, during the time that the materials for these observations were collected, they were assailed with all the artillery which sedition could bring against their attachment to their country and its magistracy.

It is indeed going very far for an instance to quote the situation of Ireland as a parallel case with that of the Highlands. Ireland most certainly affords a melancholy proof of deep-rooted animosities in a whole people, as well as of the fury with which they occasionally break forth. But can any one reasonably compare the temper of the Highland peasantry, many of them dispossessed of their farms, and obliged to look out for other sources of employment within the country, to that of men deprived of their ancient and hereditary estates by strangers in origin, in language, in manners, and, above all, in religion, and in virtue of a title which they conceive no length of time can validate. Such sources of discontent may well

be kept alive when, in addition to all this, the dispossessed and persecuted party may be led to entertain the hope of regaining their original prerogatives, as they form four-fifths of the population of the country. The change in the Highlands which drives some of the inhabitants from the country into towns and villages, and instead of being all husbandmen, incites some of them to become fishers and manufacturers, can leave no such permanent impression of deep regret for the occupation they have quitted, as to prove dangerous to the public peace. We do not find that the successful manufacturer or mechanic, whose father was an agriculturist, is less contented or happy than one who has succeeded his father in the same profession. Did any of the apprehensions entertained about the progress of discontent among the workmen in Glasgow and Paisley, during the first years of the French Revolution, arise from the circumstance of so many Highlanders being employed, who either ~~themselves~~ themselves, or whose fathers had been turned out

of their farms? Did those, so eager to excite a spirit of disloyalty and discontent, dwell upon such topics?

IX. 'It appears very unaccountable to Lord Selkirk, that the gentlemen of the Highlands should express such an extreme aversion against emigration. Since the removal of the superfluous population is necessary to the advance of their rents, Why (it may be asked) do they quarrel with that which is so beneficial to them*?' Can Lord Selkirk find no means of accounting for this, except in a total misconception of their interest? Is it so inconceivable that they should be influenced by generous feelings in preferring the real or supposed happiness of others to their own immediate advantage? If such an instance be uncommon, when it does occur, it is only the more praise-worthy. It must, indeed, be a strong principle which can direct a body of men to

* P. 126.

act contrary to what is supposed to be their best interest.

Perhaps few of the proprietors, who did so, carried their views beyond the scene of misery which an opposite conduct would have prevented: in the case of men, too, who had been the pride and support of their ancestors, and who still looked up to them as their protectors, and the source of all their comforts, Could they, without cruelty, abandon such men? Could they forget the obligations conferred on their family by the predecessors of those very persons whom they were driving away from those lands which had been secured to them in many a well fought field? Can the feelings upon which they acted be considered (on this side of the Atlantic at least) only in the light of a prejudice? Does it merit no epithet less harsh than this? Hitherto the voice of the public has confirmed the satisfaction they must have felt from having made no unwilling exiles. If the people chose to leave the country from the well-grounded hope of bettering their condition,

the proprietors neither could nor were inclined to forbid them.

But while they declined being themselves the immediate cause of emigrations, they equally declined to accept the favour of an increased rent at the hands of those who deluded their people to an unnecessary and injudicious emigration. The conduct of those proprietors who first depopulated their estates was branded from one end of the kingdom to the other with the odious names of cruelty and oppression. They did not try to justify themselves by attempts to maintain the expediency and still less the national advantages of a depopulating system, but contented themselves with pleading their lawful right ; and whatever they suffered from the odium attending their conduct, was compensated by the addition made to their rent-roll. Those again who felt that they were sacrificing their private interest for the sake of their tenantry, most naturally opposed themselves very keenly to any unnecessary desire to emigrate, excited, or at

least greatly increased, by those who, like Lord Selkirk, are proprietors of waste lands in America. Can it be wondered at, that those who endeavoured to persuade their people, that they could only enjoy happiness by abandoning their native country, that their condition was wretched, and their landlord a tyrant, were not looked upon as great benefactors to those whom they thus seduced; Extremely doubtful, indeed, is the success which, in most cases, has attended their pursuit of happiness. They have, in general, been condemned to a still greater drudgery of labour than would have procured them comfort at home; and although the wages may be greater, the price of provisions keeps pace with it in a proportion which affords no very uncommon advantages.

Those whose inclinations led them formerly, or prompt them now, to dispossess their tenantry, will not object to the principles illustrated by Lord Selkirk, and still less condemn his practise, but will look upon him with singular complacency for the part he

has taken in turning the tide of opinion from setting so strongly against them. They will not only bear ample testimony to the merit of his reasonings, but will probably have no objection also to profit a little by the practise of them. Advantageous as the speculation must have been, it would be still more so to those who should benefit both by the removal of the people from their estates in this country, and by settling them upon the property in America, which they perhaps have obtained from government gratis. From such, these reasonings will obtain the warmest approbation.

The popular clamour has not been so unjust as it too often is. For, most assuredly, it is abundantly harsh and cruel to introduce an innovation in such a way as is attended with much misery ; while, if gradually and cautiously carried into effect, the change may operate to the still greater benefit of every person connected with it without any emigration. If it be merely the desire of independence and the love of bettering their situation

in life that influences emigrants, it would, of course, be unjust to prevent them : and Lord Selkirk seems very willing to consider this as the only motive they are actuated by, and to overlook entirely that part of the predisposing causes to the late emigrations, which the proprietors viewed with a degree of jealousy which has called forth such severe remarks upon them. The late emigrations proceeded neither from necessity nor inclination : they originated in views of private interest rather than any desire of the people's good. They were carried to a length injurious to the country, so as to check those seeds of improvement, of which the growth would give ample scope to the industrious dispositions of the Highlanders.

The proprietor of land in every country has a great and important task assigned him, in as much as he has many dependents whose comfort and happiness he is bound to consult, and whose welfare is intimately connected with his own comfort as well as the prosperity of the state. But the Highland

proprietor has, at the present moment, cares and duties of a higher cast and still more extensive nature to fulfil: duties the more difficult that his own interest seems to urge him to the violation of them; and that this principle, already sufficiently strongly inwoven with the human mind, receives additional vigour from the imposing dress of philosophic reasoning, opposed to what is termed ignorance and prejudice. Among these cares, those of resisting the delusions of self-interest upon themselves, and of combating deceit and misrepresentation upon the people within the sphere of their influence, demands their constant solicitude. To those who think justly on the subject, it is plain, that a certain immediate sacrifice will, in the end, produce a still greater advantage; a little attention to existing circumstances is all that is necessary to attain this desirable object;—an object so desirable, that the generous and noble dispositions which forward its attainment, instead of being combated and ridiculed, ought to have been held up to the admiration

of the public ; and the abilities and zeal of enlightened minds could not have been better employed than in directing them to the best channel for their exertion.

If the short-sighted love of immediate gain had so completely taken possession of the Highland proprietors, as to have made a great proportion of them blindly adopt the system of depopulation, as the best means of improving their estates, we should in vain look, from men of such sordid and illiberal minds, for any great or noble effort for the amelioration and comfort of that vast body of people whose condition may be affected by their schemes of management. We should have been obliged, in despair, to admit the cold and unfeeling maxim *, “ the undeniable general right of landed proprietors to manage their property for their own advantage,” as an argument against any legislative interference, though never as a justification of a conduct condemned by morality and

* P. 129.

reason. If this maxim had been the only discovery of political science in modern times, the world would not have been much indebted for its instructions. But the feelings of the great majority of the Highland proprietors are far different indeed; too different, and too firmly rooted, for the speculations of Lord Selkirk to injure them in the most distant degree. The time seems now at hand, when circumstances will permit them to reap the full benefit of their previous forbearance; and it must indeed afford them the truest satisfaction, when they find that, while they chiefly consulted the dictates of humanity, they have at the same time been consulting the solid interest of their families.

Lord Selkirk knows (his own virtue has taught him) how much a disinterested conduct merits the applause of mankind, and that it draws even an involuntary testimony of approbation from such as would by no means practise it. Why will he not allow this merit to those, who, at the expence of their private fortunes, have declined to adopt his principles, or countenance his

plans. It is difficult to see how they could be misled upon so plain a point as that, if they adopted the system of management so successfully introduced into some parts of the country, their rents would immediately be doubled. If they saw this, and forbore out of motives of genuine unalloyed compassion for the sufferings of those poor ignorant creatures, who must be driven away from the only scenes to which they have ever been endeared, to a land of strangers, to severe and unremitting toil, great must be their merit. Sometimes, it is admitted, the proprietors have ingenuity sufficient to discover the advantage of a rise of rents, and it is no very great compliment surely ; at other times, their conduct is ascribed entirely to ignorance of what, in Lord Selkirk's opinion, their true interest ought to lead them to do. But can it be supposed, that any advantages, derivable from the facility of raising men for the army in time of war*, can have any very

* P. 127.

general influence upon the conduct of the proprietors? Allow that it has sometimes procured them commissions for themselves or their friends, such an argument might be listened to, if promotion could only be obtained by bringing to the army a certain number of recruits. But does it require much reflection to discover, that in a country where rank in the army is obtained by purchase, this would be just as effectually obtained by the additional rent obtained on the dispossession of the tenantry? If such had been the motive of the forbearance, the fallacy would have been soon detected; for it is well known how expensive to the individual it is to raise a regiment in the Highlands. It is very true, that the Highland chieftains have ever been forward, since the time that the immortal Chatham firmly attached them to the house of Hanover, to lend their assistance to the military service of their country. Upon these occasions, they have availed themselves of the claim which they had upon the people upon their estates,

for the low rents at which they were allowed to remain. They did so as a means of employing an increasing population, for whom other sources of wealth had not then opened.

The reproaches of the tacksmen and factors are also said to prevent the proprietors from seeing or following out their own interest*. How very unlikely is this to be true, from the description which Lord Selkirk gives of the proprietors whom he represents as being thus influenced? that they are non-resident, ignorant about their estates, feeling no common sympathies with their people, but leaving the management of them entirely to others. Are such the persons who would dread the reproaches, or listen to the suggestions of others? A non-resident proprietor can generally have no other view than to draw the highest possible rent from his estate; and will any person believe that a Highland proprietor exists, who has not

* P. 131.

heard of the consequences of the sheep-farming system so extensively adopted ?

Neither can their conduct be ascribed to any desire to keep down the price of labour, either in the manufacturing of kelp, or in any other occupation. " No man can live in the Highlands," we are told, " as an independent labourer ; every inhabitant of the country is under an absolute necessity of obtaining a possession of land *." How then is the price of labour to be kept down ? it must be by losing a rent much greater than the additional price payable for labour. No man of common sense could act in the manner alleged from any such motive. He must see at once that, upon a principle of enriching himself, he only repays with one hand what he receives by the other. If he cannot fail to see this, how is an opposite conduct to be accounted for ? Would any of those, be they tacksmen or factors, who hold farms from him, and who of course would

* Appen. p. 53.

be anxious to court his good opinion, presume to solicit him upon a subject with which his self-interest is so much connected, and which seems so strongly to urge him to an opposite line of conduct? The removal of any such impertinent monitor would be the necessary consequence of such an unwelcome interference. It is a fact, which any person acquainted with the present state of the Highlands knows, that so far from the tacksmen opposing emigration, they have themselves, in general, been excitors of it. Their subtenants emigrate much more universally than the tenants who hold of the laird, who is often obliged to see, with unavailing regret, the population leaving his estate, from the management of persons over whom he can exercise little or no controul. Almost every where, the small tenants are encroaching upon the tacksmen, who can hope to retain their present situation only by the emigration of those whose management is found by the proprietor to be more advantageous than theirs. Still less would the

factors represent to their landlords the propriety of retaining the former population. It is indeed most probable that their conduct would just be the very reverse. The more the rent-roll is raised, the more they will expect their services to be valued; and the fewer the tenants whose rents they have to collect, so much the lighter will their task be. Consider the difference of situation, when a factor has to collect the rents from a hundred small tenants, or from four or five substantial farmers; how much less frequent in the latter case, must be the demands for delay, and the occasions of dispute? Indeed, the trouble attending such a host of tenantry is often so great, that it is no wonder if proprietors sometimes cannot resist ridding themselves of it, since they find their rent greatly improved at the same time, instead of looking to advantages still greater and more lasting, but which require efforts of attention and zeal, which those who are born to the possession of affluence are not always inclined to bestow. They will not find their factors

very eager to prompt them to such exertions; not at least from any personal motives, for none of them are interested in the manufacture of kelp, and but a few of them have farms. Admit, however, that they really had any such inducement to make them averse to emigration, does Lord Selkirk really conceive that a Highland proprietor is a species of animal so dull and stupid as not to perceive that he sets about bettering his fortune in a most singular manner indeed, when, as is alleged, he takes but half the real rent from his farm in order to pay 10s. or 15s. per ton less to the manufacturers of kelp? The fact is, this would be a mode of obtaining a somewhat higher rent in a way extremely agreeable to a Highlander; for, instead of paying it in money, he pays it by his labour, at a season of the year when he can leave the agricultural operations of his farm, without detriment, to the management of his wife and children.

In short, notwithstanding the attempt which has been made to represent those Highland proprietors, who have injured the progress of

American colonization by a generous and public spirited resistance to unnecessary emigration, as weak men, implicitly following the council of interested persons, or themselves mistaking the plain beaten road to wealth, their conduct, when fairly examined, will appear to have proceeded from no other motive than that of sparing the misery consequent upon the adoption of opposite measures. Some of them of late seem to have established a most important truth, that the improvement of the country, and their own advantage, will be found most surely and steadily advanced by retaining the present population; and upon this principle the management of many great properties has been conducted for some years past with the most gratifying success. It is difficult to see why Lord Selkirk should wish to strip them of the merit of pure and upright and honest intention; if they be mistaken, this can neither detract from the truth of his speculations, nor from the applause due to his conduct.

It is at best an illiberal and often an unjust mode of arguing to ascribe motives and feelings different from what are publicly professed or generally credited. For instance, how would Lord Selkirk consider himself injured if any of the Highland proprietors were to retort upon him, and represent his conduct, for which he claims the merit of disinterested and enlightened benevolence, in some such view as the following?

It is acknowledged, they might say, that the first idea of the plan which he has since executed was adopted very early in life, and during the course of his academical studies, and confirmed in the course of an extensive tour through the Highlands in the year 1792. The impressions of early life are warm, but they are not on that account the more likely to be correct: the ardent sensibility of youth is too apt to be roused with the rhapsodies of the celebrated classics of antiquity about political happiness, and not a few have traced the errors of maturer age to the unchastened studies of their boyish years. It was at a time too

when reform was sounded from one end of the kingdom to another, and which could not fail both in public and in private to meet the ears of Lord Selkirk. In the struggle between what was termed liberty on the one hand, and due restraint upon the other, many, neither very ignorant nor timorous, dreaded the event from the awful lesson held out in the French revolution; and looked beyond the Atlantic for that security and peace which Europe did not then seem likely to afford. It was at a period in the Author's life when he was called upon to look out for an employment suited to his inclinations and acquirements. At that time the fourth and youngest son of an ancient and honourable family, condemned by the law of primogeniture to the prospect of a younger brother's portion, without any taste for the military profession, and no desire to shine in the senate or at the bar, and perhaps disdaining mercantile pursuits, his Lordship early turned his attention to agriculture. Under such circumstances it was no idle or unmeaning speculation to em-

ploy his patrimony in cultivating the fields of America rather than those of his own country. He could not fail to know the singular advantage which a person possesses who has both means and money and agricultural skill to employ in a new and hitherto uncultivated country. The profit to be derived from obtaining a settlement in Canada, however, was so far superior to that of the United States, that he probably did not long hesitate in his choice. For in Canada, upon application to government, a tract of land fit for cultivation may be obtained for nothing, whereas it would be necessary to make a purchase of land in the United States from some individual, as all the best land there has been already appropriated. Since, amid the restrictions of society in the mother country, Lord Selkirk found himself deprived of many prerogatives which his eldest brother could alone enjoy, perhaps a little personal ambition was mixed with the desire of laying out his portion to the best advantage. In wishing to apply to

himself and his settlers, the attachment and connection which subsisted between the Highland chief and the members of his clan, he must have seen that this attachment and connexion were founded upon the direct interest created between them by means of the property of the one being occupied by the other; and if this could be cemented by the most winning arts of popularity, a settlement might be formed in Canada, where these causes might have full scope and produce the same effects which Lord Selkirk states them to have had in the Highlands. For this purpose an inland situation at such a distance as to leave only a nominal dependence upon the government was the most eligible, although, in other respects, it seems less calculated for rapid improvement than one nearer the rest of the civilized world. For the same purpose it would also be necessary to attract men of every description in the Highlands, to keep up the same rank and subordination between the chief and the meanest cotter: and when

such should be carried into effect, the romantic warmth of youth perhaps anticipated ‘nothing less than a restoration of the happy days of clanship.*’

The succession to the hereditary titles and estates of his family might perhaps have induced the noble Author to abandon the plan to which, when a younger brother, he looked as the source from which the future prospects of his life were to spring: but of some minds a persevering ardour is a prominent feature; and it is no reflection on Lord Selkirk to suppose it of that description. Lord Selkirk seems to have viewed the acquisition of wealth and consequence only as the means of carrying into execution, with more efficacy, the plan he had conceived in early youth. He applied to government therefore, and was enabled to compleat his arrangements for his establishment in Upper Canada, at a place fully eight hundred miles

* P. 192.

from the seat of government, and half that distance from the colonized part of the country. The distance was too great to admit of much controul; and its near vicinity to the hostile and savage tribes of Indians formed a bond of union, centering of course in the leader of the colony, which could only be dissolved by the annihilation of the cause from which it sprung.

To meet these views, the plan was totally different from any other upon which the cultivation of that district had hitherto been attempted. Various agents were employed, whose most active exertions were used to procure emigrants from every corner. If Lord Selkirk has been made to believe that they scrupulously engaged only those who had previously determined to go to the United States, he is grossly misinformed with regard to their proceedings. If it be conceived that only the small tenants were invited to emigrate, the public is greatly deceived. For encouragement was held out to a class of peo-

ple superior to the small tenants, as well as to the inferior class of cottars, in order more nearly to preserve 'all those peculiarities of customs and language' which it was so much his object to secure. Neither of these two classes, upon the principles of these Observations, had any occasion to emigrate; but they were necessary for the feudal subordination which was to be kept up in the new settlement. Some officers on half-pay formed a part of the emigration, and some of the inferior class who were too poor to pay for their passage, for which accordingly they engaged to serve by indenture for a certain number of years*, formed also a part of the settlement. The first class, had the object been merely the cultivation of waste land, might be termed unproductive labourers, as they were not to labour with their own hands; and the latter class could not have found their way to this settlement with-

* App. p. 26.

out an emigration beyond what was excited by the causes arising in the Highlands, as they did not originally emigrate, but only settled in the low country, when they found it necessary to leave their native districts. Had Lord Selkirk known that he should not be able to carry into effect his original plan of a remote and inland settlement, he plainly intimates that he would have confined his encouragements to the same class of people that formed the wealth of other cultivators of waste ground, or perhaps have abandoned the scheme entirely: But, before he knew that government wished a maritime settlement, we are informed that he had already proceeded far in his preparations*, and the engagements entered into must be fulfilled. A purchase was accordingly made of a large tract of uncultivated ground in Prince Edward's Island, from the proprietor, at a very easy rate. The emigrants defrayed the ex-

* P. 5.

pences of the voyage, either by their money or labour; and the land was sold at a very great advance of price. The success of these measures has not disappointed the calculations of prudence; the emolument has been very great without any great outlay of money, and merely by employing some little care and attention. Lord Selkirk still has a considerable quantity of ground uncultivated: he did not procure as many emigrants as would have been sufficient for cultivating his whole property. Additional recruits are required for the colony; but although so many have already transported themselves to it, and although those of their friends, who may chuse to follow their example, have had liberal and earnest invitations, Lord Selkirk will be able to inform the public how these invitations have been listened to. The public must know what would be sufficient to ensure success; it may also be able to conjecture what are the circumstances which must retard its further progress.

Lord Selkirk will probably object to this picture, as ascribing motives for his conduct different from those by which it was really actuated; but the public will judge, whether the motives, which have been attributed to the Highland proprietors, have not less appearance of probability than those upon which they may be supposed to account for his Lordship's conduct; and whether, after being so roughly handled by his Lordship, they could be very much blamed for retorting in this manner. They could assert, at the same time, that their account is gathered chiefly from his own statement, which he candidly admits was drawn up by way of vindication for his conduct *. No one will believe that, writing under such circumstances, the apology has been hastily or incautiously written, or that any thing has been omitted which could justify his principles or vindicate his practice.

No philanthropist need fear, that the most profitable employment of the Highlands will

* P. 8.

be found incompatible with retaining the present population ; or that the experience of those who have acted judiciously, and therefore successfully, in attaining this desirable object, will not be universally adopted. Only give the people the same advantages which others have ; let the change be made gradually ; and let opportunities be offered to the displaced tenants and cottars of usefully employing themselves. This is all that needs to be done. The most gratifying picture is presented in the general character of the Highland proprietors ; for the disposition of those who have hitherto acted so honourably and feelingly, in preferring low rents to expatriating their tenantry, entirely removes the greatest obstacle there otherwise would be to gradually improving the Highlands. In this respect, the size of the Highland estates, which are in general very extensive, while it diminishes the number of the persons, upon whose conduct so much depends, also necessarily facilitates their operations. Almost all of the great proprietors possess estates

with such varieties of situation as will furnish means suited to every different variety of employment which can influence the fortunes of their tenantry. The advantage of this is such, that it insures the beneficial effects of the exertion of the enlightened policy and improved experience of modern times, and the improvement of the Highlands. Every encouragement, which a measure of such immense national importance deserves, is at this moment most liberally bestowed by the state. Very considerable progress has already been made in facilitating the means of internal communication, which bestows a vigour and a permanency upon every other species of improvement. The patriotic views of Government have been most honourably seconded by private individuals.

The opinion entertained by those who think that the great national works in question will tend to prevent emigration, is not founded on the temporary employment they afford for a few years to those engaged in executing them*. Even this, however, would al-

* P. 58.

low a very considerable addition to be made to the sheep-farming system, without any immediate loss of population, industry, or capital, to the state. But the benefit to the general improvement of the country, arising from these public works, operates in a different manner, and will be quite incalculable. They are, in every case, the first effectual step to improvement. How different must be the progress of barter, when loaded wag-gons may with ease traverse the remotest corners of the Highlands, compared with that period when it was necessary to transport every commodity on a half starved poney, over almost impassable mountains, or through nearly trackless morasses. In a few years, we shall probably see the Banks of the Caledonian Canal covered with towns and villages, as depots for the produce of the industry of the interior parts of the country, for which foreign commodities will there be ready to be exchanged. It will no longer be necessary, as it once was, that almost the only exportable production of the country

should transport itself alive to the markets of the south. In this respect, the Highlands will soon be put more nearly upon a footing with the rest of the kingdom; and many of the disadvantages, under which it has hitherto laboured, will be softened away; so that the native and powerful energies of its active and high-spirited inhabitants will be allowed free scope, and thus be employed usefully for themselves and their country, without the most distant necessity for looking to the other side of the Atlantic for a field for the exercise of their industrious habits.

X. 'The emigrations from the Highlands,' says Lord Selkirk, 'which had been of little moment during the continuance of hostilities, recommenced, upon the return of peace, with a spirit more determined and more widely diffused than on any former occasion*.' This circumstance, that the cur-

* P. 4.

rent of emigration was checked during the late war, naturally excites a doubt how far its progress was altogether owing to the alleged necessity of thinning an unnecessarily numerous population. The effect of the war could only be, in a small degree, to enhance the freight for the passage, and to afford an opening for some of the younger and more active Highlanders to enter into the army. It recommenced, however, on the return of peace with more than ordinary vigour ; and a general ferment prevailed through the whole country, not keeping pace, in the smallest degree, with the conversion of arable and cattle farms into pasture for sheep. The bulk of those proposing to emigrate were persons not labouring under any distress, but who, on the contrary, were in possession of lands suited to their circumstances, enabling them to live at their ease* : in many instances the deserted farms held under current leases, in the possession of which they were of course

* First Report on Emigration, p. 5.

secure* : and it is a fact, that, at the very time when the rage for emigration was at the highest, there were farms unoccupied, which might have been obtained upon moderate terms, and which were actually lying waste, being deserted by the tenants notwithstanding the anxious wish of the proprietors to retain them. In most of the districts where this spirit was most prevalent, they were not only then uninjured by the consequences of sheep-farming, but not even the most distant idea was entertained of its introduction. Sheep-farming was only very partially and locally adopted at this time in the counties of Ross and Inverness: the greatest part of the country, from which the emigration was going on, was by no means adapted for this species of stock ; and no measures were even in contemplation for enlarging the farms which could account for such a spirit being so universally diffused.

* Third Report, p. 9.

The emigration, which took place in the year 1801, from the west coast of the Highlands, was comprehended in three vessels, conveying about 830 passengers to Nova Scotia*. But such was the celerity with which this spirit increased that, next year, no less than 4510 emigrants left this country, in fifteen vessels, from different parts of the Highlands, most of them destined for the United States†: and the probable extent of emigration was calculated, from the preparations which were then making, and the ferment which prevailed, at no less than 20,000 for the following year‡.

Among the instances which came to the notice of a committee of the Highland Society, whose attention was drawn to this subject, there was one estate where no less than 150 families were preparing to emigrate,

* First Report, p. 2.

† Appen. C. to the Third Report on Coasts, &c. of Scotland.

‡ Third Report, p. 3.

which comprehended the whole population upon it, with the exception of three families: upon another estate the whole inhabitants, to the amount of 2000 souls, were in correspondence upon this subject *. Lord Selkirk himself has been obliged to record an instance of this unreasonable and unnecessary disposition to emigration from the island of Barra †.

The circumstances attending the voyages of many of these emigrant ships exhibited melancholy pictures of mortality, which, added to the hardships of the situation of these poor people, naturally excited the most deep-felt compassion. This feeling would have been barren, indeed, if it had not excited the desire of removing the delusion and ignorance under which these poor people seemed to be blindly acting.

Accordingly, all these united circumstances would have been sufficient to call aloud for

* First Report, p. 3.

† P. 142.

the attention of much less enlightened patriots than the Highland Society of Scotland have always shewn themselves to be, in order to discover, if possible, what were the efficient causes of such an unusual ferment in the Highlands; whether it proceeded entirely from the rapid, and therefore injudicious change of system adopted by the proprietors, or whether it did not, in a great measure, originate in the ignorance of the people, worked upon by designing men stirring them up to discontent.

Their inquiries led to a full discovery of
 ‘ the instigation of interested persons, who
 ‘ promote the ferment of the people, and go
 ‘ about recruiting for the plantations with the
 ‘ usual eloquence of crimps*.’ These are the words of a contemporary author. The persons, however, thus employed did not make these exertions for the sake of the poor Highlander that he might profit by these hitherto untried scenes of enjoyment; for we

* Irvine on Emigration, p. 67.

learn from the same author, that, of these persons, ‘ some instigators have lands in America, but they have no people to cultivate them : they must try then to supply this want, by those measures which interest suggests, by large promises of prosperity, and by gay descriptions of the country *.’ But the other class of instigators, who may be aptly termed crimps, have no lands upon which they can set down the people whom they solicit to leave this country : the sole object of their profit is the freight which they obtain from each passenger : the sooner and more completely they fill up their cargo, so much the greater of course will the advantage be. ○

That such persons would not be very scrupulous in the means they made use of to serve their own interest need scarcely be remarked : it would be singular indeed if we found them going about giving a fair representation of the hardships of the voyage, the

* Irvine on Emigration, p. 68.

difficulties to be encountered in America, and the real circumstances in which the emigrants would find themselves placed : as little can we expect to see such persons limit their temptations to the necessities of the people and the conduct of the proprietors. Lord Selkirk himself acknowledges, that ‘ the machinations of the leaders of emigration, as described in the Reports (of the Highland Society) are nothing more than might reasonably be expected from men of that stamp in a country where a general tendency to irritation prevails :’ yet it is thought to be absurd, that ‘ the Society should consider these artifices as the prime source of all the discontent they observe, and assign as their ultimate motive the unjust and tempting gains accruing to the traders in emigration *.’ The times in which we live have afforded many melancholy lessons in the study of human nature. We all witnessed, with a well grounded apprehension, the ra-

* P. 143.

pid progress, among the low and ignorant, of opinions as agreeable to their passions and feelings as inconsistent with the due order of civil society. When once the artful and the eloquent obtain a hearing, the contagion spreads like a mighty torrent, bearing down every thing which resists its progress. Can any subject be addressed to the imagination more captivating than the prospect of happiness? It is not difficult, in any situation of life, to create discontent: every condition may admit of amelioration. Wherever imagination is set afloat, and scope given for the free current of our desires, reason loses it controul. ‘A thousand gay illusions sport before the eye, and solicit the fancy. Present advantages become insipid, or sink in esteem; the future gains what the present loses*.’ The most deceitful representations are held out of the blessings to be found in America: the climate and the very elements are represented as assuming something like paradisiacal harmony:

* Irvine, p. 60.

no difficulties are to be met with ; but the earth is supposed almost spontaneously to yield her increase : ‘ Where there is no landlord, no factor, no threatening for rents at Martinmas.’ These delusions, of course, are circulated, and every kind of authenticity is given to them by the leaders of emigration. It is very much their interest to do so ; and so successful are they, that even Lord Selkirk has admitted, that ‘ the emigrants are seldom fully aware of the discouragements*’ they are to encounter. How should it be otherwise ? Does any person suppose that they would emigrate, if they knew but the one half of the truth which escaped even from Lord Selkirk himself, that “ there cannot be a more extreme contrast, to any country that has been long under cultivation, or a scene more totally new to a native of these kingdoms than the boundless forests of America. *An emigrant set down in such a scene, feels all the helplessness of a child.* He has a new set of ideas to acquire ; the knowledge

* P. 178.

which all his previous experience has accumulated, can seldom be applied; his ignorance, as to the circumstances of his new situation, meets him on every occasion*."

What is the effort required for removing to the low country, compared to this; where, if he is to be employed in a new occupation, he is surrounded by those who can instruct his ignorance and assist his helplessness? How much rather should he prefer remaining in the land of his fathers, to this looking for untried scenes of happiness in a country and in an occupation for which his previous habits lend him no aid, and his previous experience leaves him only the weakness of a child. Can any thing but delusion lead him to America? No sooner is one cargo landed, than on the return of the crimps, before mentioned to look out for a fresh supply, a great number of letters, supposed to be written by those who went before, are transmitted to their friends and neighbours. These give flattering accounts of the success

* P: 178.

of their voyage, and the happiness they enjoy after having made the experiment. These letters are given out as being written by the direction of persons who can neither read nor write; and it need scarcely be added, that all the letters of an opposite tendency, sent home by the same conveyance, are suppressed. Lord Selkirk is pleased to remark, that ‘ throughout all British America, at least the ports, are under the same regulations as at home, and that (under the authority of the postmaster general of England) letters may be conveyed from almost every part of the colonies, more tediously indeed, but (sea risk excepted) with as much safety as within Great Britain itself*.’ This is all very true; but Lord Selkirk forgets that the establishment of post offices, in the uncultivated parts of the colonies to which these poor people are deluded, is still more scanty than in the wildest and most remote part of the Highlands of Scotland, which is

* P. 139.

often at the distance of 40 or 50 miles, where a poor tenant would little think of inquiring for a letter from America. The poor people throughout the country have a singular antipathy to this kind of taxation; and, accordingly, the whole correspondence, which takes place, is carried on directly by means of these traders. That the Society did not on light grounds hazard the assertion, that all letters, not of a particular tendency, were as much as possible suppressed, Lord Selkirk probably knows, or might have known; and the following statement was given in proof of it, which, as Lord Selkirk could not possibly deny, he thought it best to overlook, and simply to say, that there was a post office establishment in America. ‘The feelings of the emigrants,’ says the reporter, ‘after finding themselves in America, are strongly illustrated by a genuine letter which the committee has had occasion to see, written in 1792, by a Highlander in America to his cousin at home. Among other things, he says, “Dear Angus, you may tell Bois-

“ dale about the people that left Uist, that
 “ they are crying every day, saying, if Bois-
 “ dale knew their condition, that he would
 “ send for them again ; but if you hear any
 “ of them talking of coming to this place,
 “ for God’s sake advise them to stay where
 “ they are, else they will repent.” ‘ How
 ‘ this letter made its way from America, in
 ‘ spite of the care which is certainly taken to
 ‘ prevent such intelligence being conveyed to
 ‘ Britain, does not appear ; but it is a cir-
 ‘ cumstance deserving of notice, that this
 ‘ was the only letter that came from the
 ‘ Uist emigrants written by the party him-
 ‘ self, while a great number were received
 ‘ by the very same conveyance, as for, and
 ‘ by direction, and in name of others among
 ‘ these emigrants, who were themselves un-
 ‘ able to read or write, and containing the
 ‘ most flattering accounts of their situation*.’
 Is it enough to dispute such a distinct state-
 ment, by simply saying, that there are post

* First Report, p. 34.

offices in America, and that the Society ought to have made inquiry into this before such an assertion was hazarded? Does Lord Selkirk really believe the Society are indebted to his Lordship's connection with America for the first notice of this piece of information? They knew also, however, that few of the Highlanders correspond with the mother country through the medium of the post office; and they had fully ascertained the remarkable fact regarding the Uist emigrants in 1792, which admits of no explanation different from what they have given. Lord Selkirk will probably find, on inquiry, that the knowledge of this practice being usual, in other cases, has produced a conviction in the colony established in Prince Edward's Island, that the emigrants to that settlement have not been exempted from it. The accounts which have reached this country, however, show that, with regard to that settlement, it has not been equally successful.

The artifices of the leaders of emigration completely account for the prodigious in-



crease in the success of American colonization, and fully explain the singular phenomenon of an emigration taking place, far beyond the supposed drain necessary, from the actual circumstances of the country.

It is said, indeed, that "no explanation is given of the mode in which the extraordinary gains arise*," which make this a lucrative trade, and which induced men to pursue it with the same eagerness with which the African slave trade used to be carried on. The gains were indeed extraordinary, as they depended not on the life and health of the passengers, but upon the death. The contractors purpose was served even before the emigrant was admitted on board. For he never was permitted to put his foot into the ship until the passage money was paid down; and the sooner the contractor was relieved of the burden of him by death, or by other means, the greater proportion of food set apart for him was saved. The more people

* P. 143.

that were crowded into one ship, so much the more profit was made at the same expence, which never was encreased by even the necessary medical attendance requisite for so many people in such circumstances. This is no imaginary picture. Upon such principles of mercantile speculation, had the trade been carried on for many years. For whatever previous agreement had been made, when the poor emigrant found that his accommodation was inadequate to the purposes of health or comfort, what could he do? He must pay for what his contract bound him to, and by giving up his farm, he had abandoned all claim to a residence in this country. He must either remain unprovided for and a burden upon his friends, with the loss of the passage money, and all his hopes of a happy independence; or he must submit to the accommodation the contractor chose to afford him. However scanty this was, the contractor might well think as long as he was under no regulations, that if he received him on board, it was all he had undertaken for.

The poor creatures were landed often in so enfeebled a state, that they were unable to reach those parts of the country where it was possible to employ them; and if they did, were quite incapable of bearing the fatigue necessary in their new situation. They thus became in many instances an intolerable burden upon the poor's rates. The evil at length became so great that several of the states enacted a law that in future no ship-master should be allowed to land any emigrant unless he found an American citizen to give security in a hundred dollars that he should not become a burden upon the country. Can a more direct testimony be given of the enfeebled state in which they landed? As the same principles of profit regulated every voyage, the circumstances attending each were in general extremely similar: in some perhaps the inconvenience was less than in others; but the following statement, taken from a judicial proceeding before the Court of Session relative to a ship that carried passengers from the isle of Sky to Carolina in

1791, is selected both for its publicity and authenticity. ' The vessel was about 270
 ' tons burden—the number of passengers
 ' about 400, including women and children,
 ' so that their situation was most uncomforta-
 ' ble and dangerous, there being hardly room
 ' for them to stretch themselves. There were
 ' three tiers of beds fore and aft, and two
 ' midship. The births for a full passenger
 ' were 18 inches broad. Those fore and aft
 ' were only about 2 feet high, including the
 ' space occupied by bedding, so that it was
 ' scarcely possible to creep into them. The
 ' others were a little higher, so that the pas-
 ' senger could turn himself on his side, and
 ' rest on his elbow. To add to their calami-
 ' ties, they neither had a sufficiency of vic-
 ' tuals nor proper cooking utensils, there be-
 ' ing only two pots of twenty-four pints
 ' each, which were quite inadequate to the
 ' preparation in any reasonable time of a
 ' meal for 400 persons. Had the vessel
 ' made out its voyage, the chief part of the
 ' people must have been consumed by dis-

‘ ease and filth, which last was horrible ; but
 ‘ after being twelve days at sea, the ship was
 ‘ dismasted and put back to Greenock, where
 ‘ many of the passengers, especially children,
 ‘ died from the effects of the short voyage
 ‘ they had made. These unfortunate people
 ‘ were completely cured of their passion for
 ‘ America ; and happily found an asylum in
 ‘ the benevolence of Mr David Dale, who
 ‘ employed them in his extensive cotton ma-
 ‘ nufactory in the vicinity of Glasgow.’*

This hitherto uncontradicted statement surely informs us of some particulars well worthy of attention, entering deeply into the merits of this question ; it is surely little deserving of the light and jocular manner in which Lord Selkirk has been pleased to represent it. Will any person believe that this is the statement to which Lord Selkirk refers when he says that nothing can be gathered from it, except that ‘ after 12 days of
 ‘ boisterous weather, the passengers were fired,

* First Rept. p. 8.

‘ especially the women and children, and did
 ‘ not chuse to proceed ; a consequence very
 ‘ likely among people who, for the first time
 ‘ in their lives, were heartily sea-sick !*’
 Need it be wondered at that the Highland
 Society of Scotland should think it unnecessary
 to take notice of the charge of inhumanity
 for endeavouring to prevent the recurrence
 of such scenes in future, when it proceeds
 from the same quarter with the above re-
 marks ?

Lord Selkirk accuses the Society of not
 producing more instances of those hardships
 which the emigrants suffered upon their voy-
 age. But their inquiries uniformly led to
 the same conclusion, though some instances
 were more fatal and better authenticated than
 others. From the nature of the case it could
 not be otherwise : the same motives uni-
 formly operated ; and the same effects were
 found to result in the years 1773, 1791, and
 1801. In this last year, two vessels, a-

* P. 147.

mounting to 559 tons, are, on good grounds, believed to have carried out to America not less than 700 persons. Will it be thought wonderful that a fever should be the consequence of this very crowded state of the vessels, and that the consequence of this fever should be, 'that 53 of the passengers died 'on board one of the vessels before reaching 'America *?' This statement, Lord Selkirk says, is given *upon hearsay*†; and the Highland Society are accused of lending their sanction to a vague report. Unquestionably it is true, that the evidence of this fact did not fall directly under their own immediate observation; the account was received from others; so far it was *upon hearsay*; but it is probable the members of the committee, who inquired into this subject, did so as coolly and dispassionately as the noble author, and that they are just as capable of judging of evidence upon this or any other subject as he can be. The fact was not difficult to be disproved, if the committee had been mis-

* First Report, p. 13,

† P. 147.

informed: It was said to have happened to one of two ships which sailed from Fort-William in a particular year; and Lord Selkirk could not have failed to have obtained a refutation of it from persons who were so much interested in having it discredited.

While the situation of the poor deluded creatures, who entrusted themselves to the designing artifices of speculators, excited the compassion of the committee, still it was admitted that ‘ it was not their object to propose that any restraint should be put on the will of any of his Majesty’s subjects who may chuse, however unwisely, to quit his native habitations, and depart abroad, more especially to some of his Majesty’s foreign possessions. As little do they wish to involve the Society in a suggestion of any restraint on the lawful solicitations of persons holding estates in his Majesty’s foreign possessions, addressed to natives of Britain for persuading them (however much to their disadvantage) to abandon their own country, where ample fields of improvement remain, in order to cultivate

‘distant lands.’ The object of the committee is only ‘to regulate the transportation of emigrants in such a way as that no undue profit may arise from its being conducted in a manner destructive to the passengers*.’

These views will unquestionably meet the approbation of every true patriot and friend to humanity; while they left open the fair road to advancement which America might be supposed to open. While true representations of the advantages or disadvantages were allowed to operate, their object was to prevent every kind of delusion originating in the interested and selfish conduct of men whose object was their own profit, and not the good of the pretended subjects of their commiseration.

The regulations proposed, in consequence of these views, have been treated by Lord Selkirk sometimes with ridicule, as unnecessary, and, at other times, by a singular abuse of words, with a charge of inhumanity. But it will probably astonish those unacquainted

* Third Report, p. 18, 20.

with the subject, otherwise than in the account he has been pleased to give of it, that the regulations which are chiefly objected to, regarding the accommodation of the passengers, which were recommended by the committee, were copied from the law regulating the conveyance of slaves from the coast of Africa to the West Indies*: and surely it was not stipulating too much in favour of our own countrymen, that their health and comfort should be as much studied in the imperative regulations of an act of Parliament, as the welfare of the negroes, to which the powerful motive of self-interest, as has been often strongly argued, must have procured a proper degree of attention. But in the transportation of the emigrants, as it was generally managed, the private interest was exactly in opposition to the accommodation, the health, and the lives of the passengers.

The wisdom of Parliament, when the matter was submitted to their consideration, thought proper to provide for the emigrants

* Stat. 38. Geo. III. c. 88.

somewhat more accommodation than is stipulated in favour of the African slaves. If Lord Selkirk chuses to find fault with this preference of his own countrymen, and this superior attention to their health and comfort, he must arraign the legislature of his country, which thought it necessary to provide for their accommodation at least equal to that provided for our forces when they go on similar voyages, which is generally at least $1\frac{1}{2}$ or 2 tons per man. The fear of contagious diseases must be much less among those who are kept cleanly by the rules of military discipline than among those who, for the first time in their lives, have lived out of the smoke and filth of a Highland cottage.

The special provisions of the act of Parliament for regulating the conveyance of passengers from any part of Great Britain, or Ireland, are treated uniformly by Lord Selkirk as the suggestion of the Highland Society: and it is wished that the world should believe that the Society entertained the idea

of preventing emigration by these restrictions, which are therefore represented as being unnecessarily severe. But it might have been expected from a person who professes to talk of "the benevolence which marks the proceedings of the Highland Society in general," which is such, as "to leave no room to doubt of their conduct respecting emigration having been founded on the purest motives;*" that if the regulations be thought unnecessarily severe or absurd, the Society, who did not propose them, should be exempted from the ridicule and blame attached to them. The impression which the representation given of the conduct of the Highland Society is meant to convey, clearly is, that the reports transmitted to Government pointed out the rule which was adopted. This Lord Selkirk, who was furnished with them, knows was not the case. In fair argument, the Society have a right to insist that more should not be imputed to them than they can clearly take the merit of.

* P. 135.

Any person who has had an opportunity of being on board an emigrant ship, navigated even according to the rules of the act of Parliament, will have no reason for thinking that any unnecessary attention has been paid to the accommodation of the people. The number of human beings crowded into one spot, without any very easy circulation of air, of people, at no time very remarkable for cleanliness, and of course still less so in so new a situation, affording so few conveniences for this purpose, makes the condition of such a ship quite different from one conveying a body of men under strict discipline, trained to habits of cleanliness and attention to airing their bedding.

Neither can it be seriously thought that the proportion of food is too great for a voyage of uncertain length, which depends entirely upon the state of the weather. Animal food is an article much less bulky, therefore carried at a much cheaper rate, and much more nutritive than farinaceous food; and surely it cannot be said that for a labour-

ing man, who, immediately upon his arrival in America, is to meet with the difficulties, and must subdue the obstacles which are so eloquently described by Lord Selkirk*, and which are sufficient to appal the stoutest heart, $3\frac{1}{2}$ lib. of animal food each week is an unreasonable allowance. Formerly, from injudicious management, and a very short-sighted policy, the economical arrangements upon this subject were so very scanty as very often so much enfeebled the emigrant, that, if he ever recovered himself from the natural depression of his mind and enervated state of his body, the period during which he was unable to undergo the immense fatigue necessary in his new situation; wasted much more of his little capital than his defective fare had saved.

But in his remarks upon this subject†, Lord Selkirk shows how little he is acquainted with that class of Highlanders who compose the ordinary emigrations. They are,

* P. 178, 189.

† P. 150.

according to his own account, the more wealthy of the tenantry, among whom, especially in the Isles, the quantity of animal food consumed in their families is very considerable indeed. It has hitherto been, and probably ever will be, more a cattle than a grain country : And can it be wondered at, that in a country where a cow may be bought from 35s. to 2l. and a sheep at 3s. 6d. or 4s. and where the necessity of importation always keeps grain at a high price*, the people should resort more to the former kind of food than the same class of people do in other parts of the country? Few families, of such a class as used to emigrate, kill fewer than six or eight sheep, besides a cow, for their support during the year. The allowance of farinaceous food is also objected to, as "being more than equal to the entire consumption of country labourers in any part of Scotland †". But, admitting that it is so,

* Statist. Account of Harris.

† P. 150.

when the ingenious author objects to an allowance of $1\frac{1}{2}$ lib. each day, he forgets the quantity of vegetable food, milk, and tea, which every where diminishes the labourer's consumption of grain. For this deficiency it was necessary to provide.

It will not appear surprising, that the desire of going as cheaply as possible to America led them to bargain for themselves just as small a portion of food as it was possible for them to subsist upon; and their ignorance of the length and hardships of the voyage, left this desire to operate in its full force, unchecked by the experience of those who cared not how soon they were relieved of the burden of supporting them. No better criterion could be obtained upon this subject than by enlarging somewhat all the allowances usually made, in order more especially to guard against the dismal effects of a voyage extending beyond the usual limits. Accordingly, in a contract entered into in the year 1802, between the owners of a vessel and a party of emigrants, the quantity of

provisions, which they insist upon, being provided for them, is as follows : 5 lib. of oatmeal, 3 lib. of biscuit, 4 lib. of beef, 1 English pint of molasses, and $\frac{1}{2}$ lib. of barley for each passenger per week, and 1 gallon of water per day. The stipulations of the act of Parliament make very little addition to the quantity of farinaceous food, and even provide less animal food than the people, when left to themselves, insisted upon. This seems to leave no room to doubt the propriety of its enactments.

But some very material provisions of the act of Parliament are entirely overlooked by Lord Selkirk, which was necessary, perhaps, as he was bringing forward a charge of inhumanity against its framers. The condition of the poor people who embarked, was miserable, not only from their crowded situation and want of food, but was also shocking to human nature, if any epidemical distemper arose among them, which was extremely likely to happen. In such a case, how much was the malignity of disease ag-

gravated by the want of any medical assistance? But whether they escaped this or not, there was no security that their agreement should be fulfilled either on shipboard or in America. The bonds which are taken as a security for having the proper quantity of provisions on board, for embarking no more than the just proportion of passengers, for airing the bedding once-day, and fumigating the vessel twice a-week, for landing them at the place agreed upon, and the necessity there is to have a skilful surgeon on board every vessel which carries more than 50 passengers, operate as a complete check against any kind of deceit. By these regulations, the trade is not prohibited, but is now placed upon the best possible footing.

This, however, does not seem to be the opinion of Lord Selkirk: ‘ The regulations
 ‘ of the act of parliament, we are told, are
 ‘ so far from being absolutely necessary, that
 ‘ it is difficult to see what object they can
 ‘ serve, except to enhance the expence of

‘passage.*’ In one sense, indeed, it may be true that it is not absolutely necessary for this country to interfere. For although the accommodation formerly was such as in general produced a very great mortality, as they were at all events quitting the country, it signified little how many reached their place of destination, which was often a foreign and independent state. But though unquestionably by these regulations, the expence of the passage be a little enhanced, can any person be so blinded by prejudice as not to perceive that the object attained is fully a recompence for this additional expence? These regulations now produce this excellent effect, that every one of those poor creatures, whose real or supposed miseries induce them to look for happiness at a distance from their native country, now knows exactly what he bargains for; and has a distinct and easy mode pointed out of obtaining its fulfilment. He is not now left, as he for-

* P. 152.

merly was, to the mercy of the contractor, who just took on board as many as he could possibly crowd together ; but he now knows that for the stipulated sum, which he is left to fix at what rate he pleases, he must have a certain quantity of accommodation. Neither will it be found that there was any check against imposition, from the circumstance of one of the emigrants themselves being sometimes contractor for the voyage *, the instances of which, however, were not very frequent. For unfortunately the interest of the contractor, whether Highlander, Lowlander, or American, whether one of their own number, or in a higher sphere of life, is decidedly at variance with the comfortable accommodation of the emigrant. Whenever one of themselves undertook to bargain about a vessel to transport them, the ship-owners of course bound him under a penalty to provide the number of passengers agreed upon by a certain day ; but in return for this, the contractor took

* P. 144.

care to secure himself in a most ample recompense. The contract formerly alluded to was clogged by a private letter granted by the ship-owners to the person who took burden for the rest of the emigrants, by which it was secretly agreed upon that, of the sum which he bargained that each should pay for his passage, he was to receive 1*l.* for his exertions. This plainly identified his interest with that of the owners of the vessel, which was to induce as many as possible to go, and to crowd as many as could be into the same vessel ; and this, whether the state of the country, their comfort, or their inclinations led them to it or not.

It is very easy to say, that ‘ in this, as in ‘ other trades, competition must be the best ‘ check to abuse.*’ But after a poor ignorant Highlander, who perhaps has never wandered beyond the district in which he was born, had given up his farm or been turned out of it ; after he had bargained for his passage, and paid down half the passage-money ; after a ship had been provided, and before he

* P. 146.

set his foot on board to inspect the accommodation provided for him, he had been obliged to pay down the other half.—If, when he got on board, he found the vessel overloaded, or the quantity and quality of the food deficient, how could he remedy this? He had in fact made himself an out-cast from the society he was leaving; he had now no home where he could repose his head; and the greater part of his fortune was in the hands of a man who might set sail with it next day, declaring it forfeited, because he was ready to fulfil his engagement by conveying him to the other side of the Atlantic. How would the emigrant, in such a case, be able to support his claim by suing the contractor in a court of law? He had no alternative but to submit to whatever was provided for him, till these regulations enabled him to fix specifically the accommodation he was to obtain for the price stipulated between them. Amidst so much ignorance on the one hand, and self-interested specula-

tion on the other, it seems perfectly plain, that ‘ much higgling would take place, sometimes deceit and imposition, and almost always a great deal of petty artifice and vulgar intrigue*.’ It will scarcely be believed possible that this admission can come from the same pen which has so loudly deprecated any interference to regulate this traffic. It is surely a very great inconsistency for any person to see, to the fullest extent, the evils complained of, and yet to consider the means which completely check these, as bordering upon a degree of inhumanity which deserves the utmost severity of his Lordship’s pen. It is indeed said†, that ‘ it does not appear how the regulations proposed can operate to remedy any of the inconveniencies arising from these circumstances, or to obviate the deceit and imposition which may occasionally have been practised by contractors.’ It is hoped, however, that the public is fully aware of

† P. 145.

† Ibid.

the way in which the Act of Parliament has effected this grand object ; and if Lord Selkirk shall ever again induce another cargo of emigrants to trust their fortunes and their happiness to him, he will probably derive the same information from experience.

After all the clamour which has been raised against the framers of this bill, who are said to have compelled the emigrant to 'waste' his capital in expences absolutely futile and 'useless,' the public will be astonished to learn how little the passage-money has been raised since the passing of the act. Prior to its enactment, the passage money was, upon an average, 7 l. * ; it is now raised to 9 l. Considering that it is partly for the useless and futile expence of medical assistance, of the equally useless and futile expence of security to be landed at the place agreed upon, as well as for the accurate fulfilment of every other stipulation, the difference, in such circumstances, would be too small to throw

* Irvine, p. 88.

any great check upon emigration; and is most amply compensated to the emigrants themselves, in the vigorous state of body which enables them to enter at once upon their distant journey to the back settlements of America, and the laborious task they have to perform when they reach their place of destination. But when it is considered, that since that period the rate of insurance has very much risen, the convoy duty has been imposed, and the wages of seamen, owing to the demand for men for the navy, have very greatly increased, so that the freight of a vessel, from the Clyde to America, has advanced at least 35 per cent. it will be found that what formerly went to the unlawful gains of the contractor now goes to the comfortable accommodation of the emigrant. A higher eulogium upon the merits of the emigrant bill cannot be devised than this simple fact.

Lord Selkirk says, ‘some persons may be inclined to doubt whether humanity was

“the leading motive of the Society*.” He goes on; ‘Whatever may have been their views, it has certainly been the subject of exultation to many individuals, that the bill, by rendering the passage too expensive for the pecuniary means of the tenantry, must leave them at the mercy of their superiors.’ It is acknowledged that this effect will be produced only in a very inconsiderable degree, not, however, to the praise either of the superiors or of the Highland Society, but from the alleged obstinacy of the people, who the more they are restrained will be the more eager to go. But does Lord Selkirk really think, that any individual, who bears the name of Briton, rejoices that any of the human race, far less their own countrymen, should be at the *mercy* of their superiors? The force of the phrase, being at a person’s mercy, is very peculiar; it is adopted, on the present occasion, to imply the possibility of the Highland gentlemen being tyrants, who would oppress the peo-

* P. 152.

ple, provided they were prevented from leaving them, the very persons whom he had already represented as being in general most indulgent masters *. But what do their superiors, according to Lord Selkirk, gain by having them at their mercy?—loss of rent, an infinite deal of trouble, and no advantage whatever. These, then, are not the individuals whose interest it is to exult at those supposed consequences of the bill: and how any other persons, possessing no property in the Highlands, can have any view but the good of their countrymen, either in the wish of their hearts or the object of their exertions, it will require all the ingenious reasoning of Lord Selkirk to point out.

The view which Lord Selkirk has exhibited of the conduct of the Highland Society would lead the world to conceive that they rested satisfied with suggesting discouragements to emigration, by restrictions and penalties, without troubling themselves about any means for its prevention, by sug-

* P. 128.

gesting sources of employment for the people at home. Had this really been their conduct, the sneers they have met with would not have been altogether so much misplaced. But such was not the conduct of the Society. For, after endeavouring to find out a check to those unlawful gains which led to an unnecessary emigration, the reports proceed to consider the situation of those emigrants who leave their country not from choice, but from a supposed necessity. It is observed, ‘ * That means are not difficult to be found whereby this supposed necessity to emigrate may be overcome, by which the landholders may in due time be not only left at liberty, but encouraged to enlarge the size of their farms, and prosecute every plan of agricultural improvement ; and, finally, through which the increasing population of the country may be found its blessing and support, instead of its burden and oppression.’ The means which are then suggested for finding em-

* First Report, p. 36.

ployment for the Highlanders, and directing their industry to the advantage of their native country, which occupy the remainder of the report, cannot but have met with his Lordship's approbation ; but they exhibit views of policy regarding the Highlands, so adverse to the principles of American colonization, that it was not to have been expected that any very particular notice would be taken of them. A higher approbation, and one much more gratifying to a genuine patriot, has been obtained, in the adoption, by the legislature, of those great objects of improvement which are now encouraged in this hitherto neglected portion of the empire, and which have been suggested and enforced by the information and zeal of the Highland Society. From one end of the kingdom to the other will be felt the beneficial consequences arising from the extension of the fisheries, the facility of inland navigation, the increase of internal communication, the consequent improvement of agriculture, the introduction of manufactures,

and the success of the arts, which add to the comfort of man in society.

Few, we are informed, will be prevented from emigrating, by all the difference of expence from the regulations introduced by the act of Parliament *. Had it been the object of the Society to put a stop to emigration by force, they would have recommended some much more efficacious measures. Such an idea they uniformly disclaimed ; and they were too enlightened and too humane, for one moment to harbour the thought of restraining the constitutional freedom of their countrymen. Their conduct was directed by the most liberal views of general policy and knowledge of individual circumstances. While they perceived designing men, for their own advantage, sowing discontent and disseminating sedition, leading to the loss of many valuable lives, and the misery of the survivors, they would have ill discharged their duty to their country, if they had omit-

* P. 153.

ted the opportunity of explaining to the legislature those circumstances of delusion on the one hand, and of crafty design on the other, which were accompanied by such manifold evils. They acted upon the conviction, that they were offering to the august Assembly of the nation, not one single sentiment unwarranted by well vouched or notorious facts; and now that they review their former recommendations with the scrutinizing eye of men whose opinions have been questioned by such high authority, they probably look back with heartfelt satisfaction on the part they have acted, and enjoy with confident anticipation the applause of their country and of posterity.

Lord Selkirk supposes, ' that the Highland society would not have recommended the measures in question, if they had been aware of all their consequences. It would perhaps (continues his Lordship) be unjust to blame them for not having considered the subject with perfect impartiality, or extended their views to the general inte-

rest of the empire. The peculiar objects of their institution lead them to pay an exclusive attention to the local interests of one district. They have given their opinion not in the character of a judge, but as a party in the cause, as representing one class of men for whom they appear as advocates at the bar of the public*.' The society might without scruple accept of this character of the measures they adopted, as it would at least identify them with one part of their country, to the interests of which those measures were, in their intention at least, directed; and it would not be assuming too much to suppose that such measures could be at least as impartial, and as generally pointed to the good of the whole state, as those dictated even by the most respectable men, who, from the zeal of system, or the bias of patrimonial interest, might be supposed, not uncharitably, to be somewhat prejudiced in their opinions. The most national member of the Highland So-

* P. 162.

ciety could not be more entitled to the appellation of a party in this question than a cultivator of Canada, or a settler of St Johns. But in truth a majority of the committee of the Society consisted of gentlemen having no interest, or a very remote interest (as that word is commonly used) in the Highlands, whose views were not bounded by local attachment or local considerations, but who looked to the welfare and security of the empire at large, in any measures which could be devised, for preserving its inhabitants to guard, or their industry to enrich it. Besides, Lord Selkirk has an unfair advantage in the argument, when he states his own ideas or his own measures as those which the society thought might be hurtful to, or inexpedient for the country. The Society were called upon to detect and to resist the machinations of men very different from his Lordship in their motives, and in the conduct prompted by those motives; men who estimated the happiness, the health, and the lives of the emigrants, only as these might or might not

be conducive to their own plans of immediate gain or of speculative advantage*.

XI. Lord Selkirk assumes it 'as sufficiently proved, that emigration, to a greater or less extent, is likely to go on from the Highlands till the whole class of small tenants be entirely drained off.' Such a position being admitted, this drain can only be effected by their leaving the island. It needs

* Lord Selkirk says, (page 145) "But allowing any degree of credit to the circumstances related in this report, (report of the Highland Society) they are far from warranting the conclusions drawn from them, and are in fact nothing more than instances of that irritation, the grounds of which have already been explained. It cannot be thought extraordinary that those who have determined on emigration, should express their discontent with little reserve, and avail themselves of the prevailing temper of the county to induce others to join in their schemes." But this statement (doubtless without design in the noble author) is a little incorrect in a most material circumstance. It was not by persons determined to emigrate, that the arts detailed in the report of the Highland Society were used to excite or encourage emigration. These were employed by men determined to get money by the emigration of others, whose dangers they were not to share, and some of whose hardships were to be a source of profit to those advocates for emigration.

not be added, that it necessarily follows,
 ‘ that it is an object deserving of some at-
 ‘ tention, and of some exertion, to secure
 ‘ these emigrants to our own colonies, rather
 ‘ than abandon them to a foreign country.’

But if the remarks, which have already
 been made, show that it is much for the ad-
 vantage of this country that no part of her
 population, capital, or industry, which can
 be employed at home, should abandon it ;
 they seem also to show, that there is none
 which cannot be so employed, and that no
 obstacle arises from the temper of the peo-
 ple to prevent this employment. We must
 not then allow ourselves to be blinded by the
 ideal splendour of possessing foreign em-
 pires. No substantial benefits can be expected
 to follow from the transfer of a part of our
 people to the opposite side of the Atlantic.
 To even the most inattentive observer, it
 will not be thought immaterial, whether the
 inhabitants of the Highlands remain where
 they now are, or form a part of our empire
 in Canada.

No modern colony, it is believed, has ever yet furnished any military force for the defence of the mother country ; and, in almost all the modern wars of Europe, the defence of distant colonies has not only occasioned a very great distraction of the military force requisite for the warlike efforts in Europe, but has occasioned an expence in general very disproportionate to the advantage resulting from their preservation. In this respect, they have, without exception, been a cause rather of weakness than of strength to their respective mother countries *. It would be a strange idea to go to the woods of Canada to raise a regiment of those hardy mountaineers for the protection of a country, which had encouraged them to look to another as their home, to which they were now to transfer their affections. Nor need it be expected that the trade we should have an opportunity of carrying on with our countrymen in this new

* Wealth of Nations, Vol. II. p. 405.

colony, would in the least degree compensate for their loss to the country.

The colonial trade, though its returns are distant, and therefore its profits less than the home trade, most certainly opens a market for the produce of such manufactured articles as exceed the demand of the home trade, and turns into this channel such a portion of the capital and industry of the country as cannot be so beneficially employed by any other means. This furnishes an indirect addition to the resources of Great Britain ; but all the addition which is obtained by transplanting the population of our own country to our foreign colony, is acquired at an expence which greatly counterbalances the advantage. Let our American colonies increase according to the usual progress of new states, or let the emigrations from Germany and Switzerland, which, from the political convulsions of the times, are likely to increase, be directed to fix there ; but let it never be supposed that the strength or wealth of the British empire will be increased by the de-

population of her own territory, in favour of her colonies. As long as we can furnish our manufactures at a rate cheaper than any other country, and more agreeable to the taste of the consumers, our manufactures will be sought after under whatever government the state may be. To think of conquering and keeping in subjection a nation for the sake of creating a demand for the produce of our industry, is one of the visions of the mercantile system which now gains very little credit ; and the idea of wasting the strength and population of the country in forming a colony, as a mart for our manufactures, seems not in the least degree more solid. In short, till our country is stocked to the full with capital, till agriculture has made its utmost exertions in cultivating the ground, till our fisheries have been carried to their utmost possible success, till every market to which we have access is glutted with our manufactures, and the carrying trade, in which we can employ our vessels, is completely occupied, it cannot be

good policy to colonize and cultivate distant territories with the view of forming a new outlet for the commodities of our country.

We all know how very far the above is from being the case, and we may therefore judge how unwise and unpolitic it is, that emigration should take place in the present political and economical state of the nation.

Although our opinion unquestionably is, that our colonies are of less use than are sometimes rated at, we are far from arguing either that they should be neglected or relinquished*. It may be well perhaps to give the colonies such an acquaintance with our manufactured produce, and to induce their capital to flow into such a channel as that, if events should occur to separate the mother country from them, they may still continue to resort to the same market. Although they were once obliged to supply themselves in this way, they will continue to do so of their own accord as long as we

* P. 158.

can furnish them with the same article cheaper than any other country. But what we contend for is, that although we ought not in point of justice to abandon the colonies which we have hitherto protected, a great part of whose population and wealth consists of what has been drawn from the mother country, we still ought never to think of depopulating our own island upon the idea of strengthening our colonies or encreasing their wealth. No country in modern Europe has arrived at such a pitch of population as that subsistence may not be easily afforded for a much greater number of inhabitants than is maintained by it. There cannot, therefore, in any country be an overflowing of population proceeding from necessary causes, but whenever emigration takes place, it must be such as the government can and ought to remove, arising from impolitic monopolies and restrictions, from unwise and unjust fiscal regulations, or from a general system of oppression which induces the young and

spirited to abandon a country no longer congenial to their feelings.

Lord Selkirk claims great merit from having turned the emigrations to our own colonies instead of allowing them to go to the United States, and talks of having given more than ordinary advantages to those who joined his colony, and of having extended his offers of encouragement as far as he could without a total disregard to his own interest.

Political circumstances had already made the tide of emigration set in strongly to our own colonies. After the close of the American war, most of those gallant Highlanders who survived the contest were settled in Canada and Nova Scotia, by the liberality of the British government. The new lands required cultivators, and the loyalists came to look for them among their kinsmen in the Highlands. Almost every district in the Highlands had furnished some one officer or other whose services were rewarded by these grants of land; so that every dis-

trict was equally assailed with temptations to the discontented peasantry to emigrate, without leaving the dominions of the British sovereign. Every year these incitements were becoming stronger, so that there was perhaps no part of the Highlands which continued to send emigrants to the United States except the isle of Sky. During the years 1801, 1802, and 1803, independently of Lord Selkirk's emigration, 25 vessels sailed with emigrants. Of these one only went to the United States; and since the era of Lord Selkirk's emigration, though several vessels have carried out the same cargo, they have without exception been bound for our own colonies, being all landed in Nova Scotia.*

* *Strictures and Remarks on the Earl of Selkirk's observations by Ro. Brown, Esq; p. 7.* If this valuable publication had appeared sooner, the public would have been spared the trouble of perusing these remarks; but it affords a very gratifying reflection that the views here detailed in general coincide so nearly with those of one who has written with so much intelligence and practical knowledge upon the subject. The observations upon the management of Highland estates, and upon the fisheries, merit particular attention.

What then are we to think of the extraordinary inducements which were held out to make the people emigrate to the very country to which their own unassisted inclinations would have taken them? If inducements were necessary and high offers of encouragement required, it must have been not to take them to our own colonies in preference of the United States, but to take them there in preference to remaining at home.

It need scarcely be added, that we look with extreme jealousy upon the suggestion of 'the measures that are necessary for diverting the current of emigration, and directing it to any part of the colonies which may appear to government the most advisable.*' It is acknowledged to be 'indispensable that some pretty strong inducement should be held out to the first party who will settle in the situation offered to them. To detached individuals it would be diffi-

* P. 163.

'cult to offer any advantage sufficiently
 'strong to counterbalance the pleasure of be-
 'ing settled among friends, as well as the as-
 'sistance they might expect from their rela-
 'tions. But if means can be found of influ-
 'encing a considerable body of people, con-
 'nected by the ties of blood and friendship,
 'they may have less aversion to try a new
 'situation : and if such a settlement be once
 'conducted safely through its first difficulties,
 'till the adventurers feel a confidence in their
 'resources, and acquire some attachment to the
 'country, the object may be considered as al-
 'most entirely accomplished. All those circum-
 'stances, which operate against the first pro-
 'posal of change, will serve to confirm it
 'when it is brought to this stage of advance-
 'ment ; and no peculiar encouragement will
 'any longer be necessary *.' We cannot
 help thinking that this system can be viewed
 in no other point of view than that of hold-
 ing out a direct encouragement to emigra-

* P. 168.

tion : that, instead of finding a remedy or palliation of an evil directly destructive of the body politic, it furnishes a provocative to the disease rendering its destructive tendency irresistible. The emigration is not now to be local and impartial, but *en masse*, and to an extent far beyond former examples. The inducement which is to be held out is to be so great that it would be sufficient to alter their original destination, which is fixed, not by motives of caprice, but because they go to the place where their friends and relations have gone before them. It must be just as great to obtain this victory over their feelings and desires, as the original determination to emigrate. Nothing short of exciting this desire seems equivalent to the effect proposed. Besides, the encouragement must not only be thus strong, but it must also be general. It is not a few detached individuals that will serve the purpose in view ; it must be, ' a considerable body of people connected both by ' the ties of blood and friendship,' that is expected to lay the foundation of a predilection

for any particular spot in those who remain. Nor is this direct encouragement, which it is allowed must be pretty strong, to be confined merely to one spot; for to serve the object of drawing off the population in the Highlands, the same inducements must be offered in every village. Of the first settlements, which were formed from different districts of the Highlands in different parts of America, 'the information sent home from each,' we are informed, 'as to the circumstances of the country in which it was situated, did not spread far. The nature of a mountainous country, and the difficulty of mutual intercourse, tended to confine any information to the valley in which it was first received *.' Thus, then, we see the extensive nature of that encouragement which will be necessary for carrying through Lord Selkirk's views, for we cannot suppose that the intercourse will increase in proportion as the depopulating effects of the sheep-farming sys-

* P. 165.

tem gain ground. Sanguine as Lord Selkirk is well entitled to be, from the numbers in the colony which he has planted in the gulph of St Laurence, we do not find that he considers the course of emigration at all diverted to that point; and the recommendation to government of providing still further inducements, points out that much yet remains to be done, in Lord Selkirk's opinion, for the benefit of the Transatlantic colonists. But even after one settlement has been fairly accomplished, and government, proceeding on the plan recommended to drain off all the small tenants, (by far the largest proportion of people in the Highlands,) wishes to form another settlement at a different spot, the same system of encouragement must be again resorted to in order more to attract this new favoured spot, the torrent flowing in the channel formerly chalked out for it.

Aware of the force of the objection, that no encouragement should be held out to emigration, Lord Selkirk, overlooking the fever of emigration which raged throughout

the country in 1802 and 1803, gives it as his opinion, that it is extremely difficult to raise a spirit of emigration merely by holding out inducements for settlers, without some other predisposing cause ; and he cites as a proof of this remark the bad success which attended the publication of the plan for settling Georgia in the year 1722 *. Some proceeding is perhaps here alluded to, which the noble author, if he fully understood, has not fully explained. For neither the name nor the settlement of Georgia, it is believed, were ever thought of till the year 1732, when letters patent were obtained by certain trustees for settling poor people there with a view to their advantage, as well as for the security of Carolina. The country had not been hitherto inhabited by Europeans. In November 1732, General James Oglethorpe, one of the trustees, embarked for what, in honour of the king, was now called Georgia, with 116 settlers, and built Savannah. From many injudicious

* P. 171.

rules, connected with the form of the proprietary government, the people, who were poor and indigent, did not thrive, although, besides the sums expended by the trustees, parliament granted 36,900*l.* for two years successively for their encouragement. Many of them found more beneficial settlements in other parts of America, particularly in Carolina. The legislature of Carolina, however, conceiving that the settlement of Georgia would be a most useful barrier against the Spanish power, sent a memorial upon this subject to Britain. ‘ The nation considered Georgia to be of the utmost importance to the British settlements in America, and began to make still more vigorous efforts for its speedy population. The first embarkations of poor people from England, being collected from towns and cities, were found equally idle and useless members of society abroad as they had been at home. An hardy and bold race of men, enured to rural labour and fatigue, they were persuaded, would be much better adapted both for cul-

'tivation and defence. To find men pos-
 'sessed of these qualifications, they turned
 'their eyes to Germany and the Highlands
 'of Scotland, and resolved to send over a
 'number of Scotch and German labourers to
 'their infant province. When they publish-
 'ed their terms at Inverness, 130 High-
 'landers immediately accepted them, and
 'were transported to Georgia; a town on
 'the river Alatamaha, which was considered
 'as the boundary between the British and
 'Spanish territories, was allotted for the
 'Highlanders; on which dangerous situation
 'they settled, and built a town, which they
 'called New Inverness.* About the same
 'time, 170 Germans embarked with James
 'Oglethorpe, and were fixed in another quar-
 'ter; so that in the space of three years,
 'Georgia received above 400 British subjects,
 'and about 170 foreigners. Afterwards
 'several adventurers, both from Scotland and
 'Germany, followed their countrymen, and
 'added further strength to the province*.'

* Morre's Amer. Geogr. p. 453.

These proceedings, which took place in the year 1735, cannot possibly be the same with those alluded to as having taken place in the year 1722 : for we find a very considerable alacrity to embrace the favourable terms which were held out to the Highlanders even during the full vigour of the feudal system ; insomuch that more of them emigrated at this time than had originally left England when Georgia was first settled ; and the way being once pointed out, others continued occasionally to find their way to the city of New Inverness. In short, so very strong in the human mind is the design of bettering our condition, and so blind is the pursuit of happiness, that it has at all times been found not very difficult to excite a spirit of emigration to an extent quite disproportionate either to the moral or physical state of the country.

But Lord Selkirk forgets the existence of an additional predisposing cause in the changes now going on, and that their bad effects should be obviated as much as possible instead of being cherished. The High-

lands are at this moment an object requiring public attention, as many important advantages which they are capable of affording will be lost, and the future progress and advancement of the country much retarded, unless judicious plans are adopted and skilfully executed.

Impressed with this conviction, we must be allowed to say, that it must give pleasure to every real patriot, studious only of the good of his country, and of the happiness of his fellow citizens, that the plausible eloquence of Lord Selkirk was not able to induce administration to enter into his views. It is hoped that the wisdom which guided that determination will continue to regulate the conduct of those who now hold the future destinies of the British Empire. For instead of government holding out any inducements to forward this colonising system in the present state of the country, it is the duty of a wise and patriotic administration neither forcibly to check the desire of emigration, nor resolutely to interfere with proprietors in their right to manage their estates in the way they deem most

advantageous,—but to afford every facility to the employment of the population and industry of the country which otherwise must abandon it—to remove every obstruction to the success of a measure fraught with so many and such incalculable benefits—to give every encouragement, so far as is consistent with the welfare of the rest of the empire, to the discovery of the resources which the Highlands contain—to second the patriotic zeal of the proprietors, who, as an earnest of their desire of preserving to the country useful citizens and able defenders, have hitherto contented themselves with very inadequate returns from their estates. These are the objects becoming the legislature of this hitherto highly favoured country to attend to: because every increase of our internal resources makes us still more able to resist the towering ambition of our rival on the other side of the Channel, who, amidst all the events which have hitherto convulsed the Continent, looks with a steady eye to the destruction of our naval power and commer-

cial superiority. For this contest, all the vigour and energies of our country must be called forth to preserve the proud independence which has hitherto distinguished the British Isles. Other nations have crouched beneath the yoke, and bowed their heads at the foot of usurpation ; but, while the wealth of this country does not enervate our minds nor enfeeble our bodies, and the great internal resources of which she is possessed remain, we may bid defiance to all the menaces of our enemies.

THE END.

Alex. Smellie, Printer.